# NUNIWARMIUT LAND USE, SETTLEMENT HISTORY AND SOCIO-TERRITORIAL ORGANIZATION, 1880-1960

A

THESIS

Presented to the Faculty
of the University of Alaska Fairbanks

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By

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Fairbanks, Alaska

May 2009

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## Abstract

Prior efforts to identify traditional socio-territorial groups among the Central Yup'ik Eskimos of southwestern Alaska have been primarily theoretical in nature, examined the subject from very restricted temporal perspectives, and were heavily reliant on a small body of written historical accounts—none of which were informed by contacts with indigenous populations across the entire region. The collective results are inconsistent and largely unverifiable; hence many basic details about Yup'ik socio-territorial organization remain obscure.

This study deviates from its predecessors in geographical focus, temporal scope and methodology. The geographical focus is on the *Nuniwarmiut* (or Nunivak Eskimos), both the most isolated and best documented of all Central Yup'ik populations. Its temporal scope covers a period of 80 years, the earliest point of which marks the practical limits of reliability of the available ethnographic data. Finally, the study's methodology is ethnohistorical; it employs a rich array of complementary historical, ethnographic and archeological data to produce a far more detailed account of socio-territorial organization than has been compiled for any other population in the region.

The findings indicate socio-territorial organization among the *Nuniwarmiut* took the form of local groups organized around winter villages. The functional stability of each group was susceptible to various natural and cultural factors; in fact, such groups ranged in number from as many as 30 to as few as 7 over the course of the study period. The *Nuniwarmiut* society was a level of identity above the local group; it was comprised of the totality of local groups that existed at any point in time, but was not itself a socio-territorial unit. Overall, the study demonstrates that socio-territorial organization among the *Nuniwarmiut* was substantially more complex and dynamic than previously recognized.

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Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I thank the people of Nunivak Island for teaching me aspects of their rich history and culture, and for repeated acts of kindness and hospitality on my behalf. I owe special debts of gratitude to the following individuals: Howard and Muriel Amos, Walter and Nona Amos, Richard and Irene Davis, Hultman Kiokun, Robert and Edna Kolerok, Harry Mike, Andrew Noatak, Olie Olrun, Peter Smith, Sr., Moses Whitman, and Jack U. Williams, Sr.

I also want to acknowledge the encouragement, advice and inspiration provided to me over many years by four particular individuals, all of whom are now deceased: Lydia T. Black, Margaret Lantis, William L. Sheppard, and James W. VanStone. My long-term (and continuing) correspondence with Ernest S. Burch, Jr. has also motivated me to complete this degree.

Sincere thanks for their support, suggestions and constructive feedback concerning my work are also extended to my advisory committee members: Peter P. Schweitzer (chair), Phyllis Morrow, Molly Lee, and David Koester.

Finally, I also thank my close friend Robert M. Drozda for sharing his insightful observations about and knowledge of Nunivak Island, and for his frequent assistance in the course of this study; Lenore Heppler for help in formatting this manuscript; my wife Carolyn A. Pratt for her seemingly limitless patience, good humor and steady support; and Rawly ("Big R") whose unique personality, gentle spirit and loyal companionship were gifts I will never forget.

# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

> *The way forward is through the mutual work of conceptual clarification and critique, and the ethnographic study of particular cases (Hirsch and Stewart 2005:272).*

Traditional Eskimo societies varied in numerous and important ways across the circumpolar north, particularly with respect to kinship and social structure. A point most scholars agree upon is that kinship was the controlling factor in Eskimo group formation (e.g., Damas 1963; 1972a:43-44; cf. Damas 1984:400); but membership was usually defined on the basis of shared language, culture and territory as well (e.g., Burch 1975:291). It also is now widely accepted that the most basic unit of Eskimo society was not the isolated nuclear family (e.g., Murdock 1949, 1960; cf. Damas 1984:393) but the "household" (e.g., Burch 1975:295-300; Fienup-Riordan 1984:69; Guemple 1972a:84-85; Heinrich 1955:16; 1963:85-86)—that is, an extended family made up of two or more complete or partial nuclear families.

Each household constituted a residential and economic unit, with food sharing and cooperation in economic pursuits being an expectation imposed on all members (e.g., Guemple 1972b:73; Nuttall 2000:53-56). Households normally functioned independently from one another in some parts of the year, their members scattering across the landscape to pursue seasonal subsistence activities, often at annually

occupied "family" camp sites. But multiple households might gather at selected, highly-productive subsistence sites or at special regional events such as trade fairs (e.g., Burch 1984a:304-306); and they typically came together at an established home settlement in the fall, where they remained through the winter. Despite widespread similarities, however, there was also considerable individual, local and regional variation in subsistence strategies and settlement orientations (e.g., Gubser 1965:62; Mauss 1979:23-56; Oswalt 1967:26, 86-115; Sheppard 1986; Wolfe 1979:35-45).

In any event, winter settlements were the recognized centers of Eskimo local groups (e.g., Ray 1964:61-62)—all members of which are accepted as having shared ties of kinship, of one sort or another (cf. Taylor 1984:518). The majority of such groups probably included 2-3 households and about 25-30 total members; but others may have been comprised of 20 or more households and 200-400 people. This marked variability in group size helps explain why the anthropological literature has inconsistently designated these units as bands, tribes, societies, village or local groups, ethnic groups, local families, regional groups/confederations, or nations. Worse yet, different individuals who described Eskimo groups did not use the same criteria for identifying and separating one group from the next (e.g., Pratt 1984a, 1984b). From a circumpolar perspective, the available data on any given region's Eskimo populations are usually too incomplete or problematic to allow for the development of authoritative accounts identifying the actual names, numbers and

territorial boundaries of the groups that traditionally occupied a given area.[1] The creation of just such an outcome is the central objective of my study on the *Nuniwarmiut*[2] of southwest Alaska.

**Research Question**

The definition and identification of traditional Eskimo groups in the Central Yup'ik region of southwest Alaska did not become a subject of serious anthropological inquiry until the decade of the 1980s, and it has been largely ignored since that time. As the present study returns to this arena, it will be instructive to summarize the various ways anthropologists (including myself) have addressed the subject to date.

My previous work (Pratt 1984a, 1984b) critically reviewed the historical literature on the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta and detailed the inconsistent ways in which its Eskimo groups had been identified and defined, emphasizing that existing "tribal maps" of the area were wildly incongruent (cf. VanStone 1967:109-121). In contrast, Ann Fienup-Riordan (1983, 1984) discussed the composition of traditional Central Yup'ik groups (which she called "village groups"), and improved on the aforementioned 'tribal maps' by presenting a carefully constructed picture of "regional groups"—each being a confederation of two or more village groups—thought to have been existing at

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[1] The extensive, protracted work of Ernest S. Burch, Jr. (e.g., 1980, 1998, 2005, 2006) on the Iñupiaq of northwest Alaska may be an exception.

[2] Cup'ig orthography used herein is based on Amos and Amos (2003), occasionally supplemented by Drozda (1994). The presentation of terms from other Central Yup'ik dialects follows the orthography developed by the Alaska Native Language Center (e.g., Jacobson 1984).

historic contact, circa 1833 (Fienup-Riordan 1984:91-93).[3] Anne Shinkwin and Mary Pete (1984:96-99) identified village-based, Yup'ik societies that were recognized in the region as of 1983 and suggested they served as a "tentative guide" to the societies as they existed in the early 1900s.[4]

Thus, accounts anthropologists have most recently produced of socio-territorial Eskimo groups in this region lacked any broad temporal perspective; instead, they were snap-shots of how the authors thought the region looked at very specific points in time: i.e., "circa 1833" for Fienup-Riordan (1983, 1984), and the "contemporary" date of 1983 for Shinkwin and Pete (1984). This does *not* mean the groups under consideration were treated as static entities of some sort; in fact, change was a central element in both those studies. The point is that previous researchers have lacked the necessary data to identify discrete Eskimo groups—by name and geographic position—in the region over time. No such description has yet been presented for the region, or for any of its recognized sub-divisions; this constitutes an important gap in the literature on the Central Yup'ik.

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[3] Fienup-Riordan (1984:65-68) also presents information about "village groups" identified along the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta coast in an 1891 census conducted by Father Aloysius Robaut, a Catholic Jesuit.

[4] Studies by Robert Wolfe (1981) and Elizabeth Andrews (1989, 1994) are also relevant to this general subject, though they concerned individual Yup'ik groups (the *Kuigpagmiut* and *Akulmiut*, respectively) and therefore were non-regional in scope. Significantly, both authors specifically addressed the issue of territoriality relative to their study groups.

In my earlier work on the topic, I argued that in the Yukon-Kuskokwim region, "with the sole exception of the physical boundary separating the Eskimos of Nunivak Island from those of the mainland" (Pratt 1984b:57), there is not one easily defensible group boundary documented in the historical literature on this region's 19th century Eskimo populations. This study uses that declaration as a starting point for critically examining the question of whether—as consistently reported in the literature (e.g., Fienup-Riordan 1984; Lantis 1946; Nelson 1899; Oswalt 1967; Shinkwin and Pete 1984; cf. Nelson 1899:25-26; VanStone 1967:118-119; Zagoskin 1967:210-211)—the Nunivak people were historically comprised of a single socio-territorial group, from the 19th century to the present. As described below, I will resolve this question by: (a) exploring indigenous concepts of group composition; (b) documenting perceived individual and family rights to specific places and resources on the island landscape; and (c) delineating clear and repetitive patterns of kin-based site occupations over multiple human generations.

Specifically, I analyze this research question for each 20-year interval in the study period. That is, I determine the socio-territorial make-up of the *Nuniwarmiut* as of circa 1880 then make similar determinations for the years 1900, 1920, 1940 and 1960.

**Methodology and Data**

The research methodology of this study is chiefly ethnohistorical in nature: i.e., a "time-oriented approach" (Oswalt 1990:xvi; cf. Krech 2006) utilizing a broad

combination of ethnographic, archeological, archival and written historical data—all of which are subjected to critical evaluation (e.g., Barber and Berdan 1998:247-273; Damas 1998:170-172; Galloway 2006; Lantis 1970; Trigger 1987:11-26; VanStone 1970). This interdisciplinary, historiographic methodology is well-suited to the inherently complex task of interpreting Native history (see Nabokov 2002).

Although some ethnohistorians rely primarily on written documents, oral accounts are the main data source for my study. As with written documents, the exercise of caution is essential when evaluating the historical accuracy of oral accounts (Vansina 1985; cf. Barber and Berdan 1998:251-252). To promote careful interpretations of such data, my analyses divide *Nuniwarmiut* oral accounts into two categories: (i) those based on events and conditions witnessed or experienced by the speaker; and (ii) those concerning events and conditions in the more distant past, not witnessed by the speaker, but passed down through generations (Barber and Berber 1998:248). Oral accounts utilized herein are qualified accordingly.

The specific data sets described below provide the bulk of the information on which the study is based; and each has applicability to the entire study period (1880-1960).

- Data Set 1: Ethnographic data I gathered during field research on Nunivak Island between 1986 and 1996. This has consisted principally of tape recorded interviews with Mekoryuk residents (mainly elders) directed at

documenting their individual and family "residence histories." In each case, the interviewee was asked to identify the winter village(s) and seasonal camp sites used, over time, by his or her immediate family and ancestors. Attempts were made to order this information chronologically. The interviewees' places of birth were also solicited, as were those of their parents, grandparents, spouses, and spouses' parents and grandparents. This research also addressed broader, related issues such as population change.

- Data Set 2: Ethnographic and archeological data generated by fieldwork conducted on Nunivak by US Bureau of Indian Affairs researchers (including myself) between 1986 and 1991. This work was carried out pursuant to Section 14(h)(1) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) of 1971 (see Pratt 2009a). It included archeological surveys of 135 historic and prehistoric site parcels (consisting of former villages, camps and cemeteries), and produced about 120 tape recorded oral history interviews with *Nuniwarmiut* elders. Focused on documenting the history of Native use of each of the surveyed sites, this work culminated in the production of a 1,300 page, 6 volume report (i.e., US BIA ANCSA 1995)—of which I was the compiler, editor, and principal author. I also collected information of a more general nature on an additional 100 or so ["non-14(h)(1)"] sites on the island in the course of these surveys.

- Data Set 3: *Nuniwarmiut* place name data (Drozda 1994). Between 1986 and 1994, Robert Drozda and I recorded over 1,000 Cup'ig place names on Nunivak. Most of these names are firmly anchored to known, verified points on the island's landscape: that is, the names have been "field-checked." To the maximum degree possible, these place names have also been correlated with existing names published on US Geographical Survey topographical maps, and settlements listed in census reports concerning the *Nuniwarmiut* (e.g., see Pratt 1997; US BIA ANCSA 1995 – Vols. 1 and 2).

- Data Set 4: Primarily comprised of unpublished *Nuniwarmiut* genealogical data Margaret Lantis provided to me. These data include a key that identifies each of the individuals fictitiously named in Lantis' (1960) monograph on *Nuniwarmiut* biographies and interpersonal relations. In addition to those of Lantis, other unpublished kinship data gathered by me, by census enumerators, ANCSA 14(h)(1) researchers, and local *Nuniwarmiut* scholars are consulted.

- Data Set 5: Published anthropological and historical literature (e.g., Curtis 1930; Griffin 2004; Lantis 1946; Pratt 1990, 2001) and relevant archival records. These materials are reviewed for any information they contain about the specific objectives identified below; virtually all of them include some data about historic *Nuniwarmiut* subsistence and land use patterns.

The five data sets are critically reviewed, inventoried, and cross-referenced for information that can contribute to the following primary goals: the identification of direct links between named sites on Nunivak Island and specific *Nuniwarmiut* individuals and families; and elucidation of the occupational histories of traditional winter villages, including explanations for their abandonment. In addition to facilitating the tracing of individual and family site use over time on the island, this effort substantially improves understanding of historic *Nuniwarmiut* land use, local group organization, and population dynamics (including the impacts of various epidemics).

Another major goal of the study is to identify, by name and geographic position, historical *Nuniwarmiut* local groups—as recognized by the people themselves (cf. Hirsch and Stewart 2005:267), and at different points during the study period.

**Analytical Concerns**

Classificatory, bilateral kinship systems that provide opportunities for creating wide circles of kin (Gjessing 1960:79; cf. Nuttall 2000:44-45) are applicable to the vast majority of Eskimo societies. One of the noteworthy exceptions to this pattern, however, is Lantis' (1946:239-246, 161; 1984:216-219) description of unilineal

descent groups with a patrilineal bias among the *Nuniwarmiut*.[5] Lantis (1946:239 [note 156]) called each such group a "lineage"—which in her usage meant "an extended unilateral family (patrilineal) having no essential territorial association or restriction." She further reported that "matrilocal residence was the rule, at least temporary matrilocal residence," noting that a young family might build a house of its own after a few years of marriage and the birth of children (Lantis 1946:161).

It is of considerable interest that the *Nuniwarmiut's* nearest neighbors—the Nelson Island Eskimos—are described as having had a substantially different, bilateral kinship system, like other Central Yup'ik groups (e.g., Fienup-Riordan 1983:144-158; 1984:69). The anomalous nature of the *Nuniwarmiut* kinship system relative to all other populations with which it shares the "Central Yup'ik" classification begs for an explanation; yet, previous researchers have not attempted to devise one.

Clearly, Nunivak's isolated setting must factor into the equation. As Lantis (1946:260) correctly pointed out, "the natural environment assured the island of comfortable isolation for six months in each year." That is, Nunivak is separated from the adjacent mainland by the 40-km wide Etolin Strait, the strong currents of which normally prevent its waters from freezing solidly at any time during the winter months (Griffin 2004:116; Pratt 2001:33). The absence of solid pack ice effectively

[5] Fienup-Riordan (1984:69) cites Lantis (i.e., "1946:238 ff") in support of the statement that the basic social unit of the Yup'ik was "the bilateral extended family"; this is contradictory to Lantis' actual description of the *Nuniwarmiut*.

prevented human travel (whether by boat, foot, or dog team) to or from the island from about late fall through late spring, thereby limiting intergroup contacts between the *Nuniwarmiut* and mainland peoples (cf. Lantis 1946:260; 1960:190). It is also significant that Lantis (1946:153) conducted a year of ethnographic research on Nunivak less than one generation after sustained contact arguably began; and, fortunately, her work included the collection of extensive biographies and genealogies (see Lantis 1960). This increases the likelihood that the kinship system described by Lantis closely conforms to the system that existed on Nunivak prior to intense contact.

With these points in mind, in this study I critically evaluate existing data on historic *Nuniwarmiut* land use and settlement patterns to determine: (a) whether they also reflect a 'patrilineal bias'; and (b) if Lantis' conclusion that 'matrilocal residence was the rule' is confirmed.

Another concern involves the subject of territoriality. In addition to ascertaining if the data document more than one socio-territorial group among the *Nuniwarmiut*, this study specifically seeks to determine if the *Nuniwarmiut*, per se, were "territorial"—in the most widely recognized sense of that term's meaning. That is, assuming there was more than one social group on the island were they separated by recognized boundaries that were "defended" through physical force against trespass? On the other hand, if the *Nuniwarmiut* comprised a single socio-territorial group did the

group forcibly defend its island homeland against outsiders? Along these lines, suggestions of "territorial-like" behavior the data contain (including "warfare") are described and evaluated against known patterns of *Nuniwarmiut* land use to assess the probability that they actually occurred...and, if so, how commonly?

Because Nunivak Island had such a dense and predictable subsistence resource base, as well as a comparatively high human population density (see Pratt 2001:41), the boundary defense question is considered relative to the "economic defensibility model" (Dyson-Hudson and Smith 1978)—which predicts territoriality will result in precisely that type of situation. Another reason for using this model is to facilitate comparison of my findings on the *Nuniwarmiut* with those described by Andrews (1989, 1994) for the *Akulmiut*: a Central Yup'ik group from the so-called "Big Lakes" area of the Yukon-Kuskokwim mainland. Without any evident uncertainty, Andrews concluded the *Akulmiut* were territorial—as predicted and defined by this model.

The only other Central Yup'ik group that has been closely scrutinized with respect to territoriality is the *Kuigpagmiut* (who occupy the lower Yukon River area). There, Robert Wolfe (1981) concluded the people were definitely non-territorial...except in certain contexts where they interfaced with Western legal institutions. Wolfe's evaluation of *Kuigpagmiut* territoriality did not consider the economic defensibility model, but it plainly was not supported by his findings. Perhaps more significantly, Wolfe described five principles for regulating land use among the *Kuigpagmiut*:

participatory use; geographic affiliation; deference to first users; kinship affiliation; and optimization (Wolfe 1981:240-252). My study considers whether the *Nuniwarmiut* also used these or similar principles to regulate land use.

I also evaluate *Nuniwarmiut* claims of "ownership" to certain resource-harvesting sites or locales by individuals and/or local groups (see Pratt 1990; 2001:36-37) against Lantis' (1946:242) assertion that, "No one had right to any territory; anyone could fish or hunt anywhere" (cf. Lantis 1946:178, 260). Finally, notions of territory and land or resource ownership are considered relative to cultural beliefs that animals gave themselves to humans as long as the latter satisfied certain rules of behavior concerning proper treatment of and respect toward animals (e.g., Fienup-Riordan 1983:175; 1986:29; Lantis 1984:220-221; Williams 1991).

**Time Frame**

Selection of the study period of 1880-1960 is based on three points. First, this study requires kinship data—specifically, genealogical data—that can reliably be used to connect individuals and families to discrete sites on the island's landscape. Such data are available, but cannot be confidently extended farther back than about 1880 (e.g., Lantis 1946:236 [note 151]). Secondly, land use and settlement patterns over most of that period are exceptionally well-documented (e.g., US BIA ANCSA 1995), primarily in oral history accounts of *Nuniwarmiut* elders. Finally, the *Nuniwarmiut* occupied seven winter villages (scattered along the island's coastline) as recently as

1940 (Lantis 1946:156, 162); but by 1960 they had settled permanently in a single village, Mekoryuk. Thus, 1960 marks the end of the population "centralization" process on Nunivak and also the latest possible terminal date of what might be termed the "traditional period of land use" (cf. Lantis 1946:161).

**Organization of the Study**

Anthropological knowledge of traditional Central Yup'ik Eskimo concepts of group identification and socio-territorial organization is sorely limited; however, rich and voluminous information concerning its most divergent population (the *Nuniwarmiut*) affords an excellent opportunity to improve this situation. These points are explained in Chapter 1.

Chapter 2 discusses the primary theoretical issues upon which this study is founded; all of them involve questions of anthropological debate focused on hunter-gatherer societies.

Chapter 3 describes the Central Yup'ik Eskimos, as a whole, to provide context for the more specific attention later given to the *Nuniwarmiut*. The subsection "Socio-Territorial Considerations" is particularly important in this regard, as it lays out some basic problems associated with identifying historical Eskimo groups in this region.

In Chapter 4 the focus shifts to the *Nuniwarmiut*. The information presented therein highlights these peoples' relative isolation from and different historical circumstances compared to other Central Yup'ik populations.

Chapter 5 demonstrates the depth of information available about historical land and site use on Nunivak Island. It also shows how *Nuniwarmiut* individual and family residence histories can be combined with place name documentation and genealogical or biographical data to map peoples' movements across the island landscape over protracted periods of time.

Chapter 6 connects-the-dots created by the previous chapters. It reveals how the available data allow for a much more fine-grained and temporally extended analysis of socio-territorial organization on Nunivak Island than is possible elsewhere in the Central Yup'ik world. This point is illuminated through a critical review of how researchers have previously described Central Yup'ik socio-territorial groups.

Finally, in Chapter 7 conclusions about *Nuniwarmiut* concepts of group and territory are presented, and the study findings are placed in a broader context through a brief comparison with other Alaska Eskimo populations. Additionally, several approaches taken by other anthropologists concerned with reconstructing traditional Eskimo groups are critiqued as a way of emphasizing key problems related to data limitations and interpretation.

# CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Throughout the study period, the *Nuniwarmiut* were what anthropologists have long recognized as a hunter-gatherer society. Questions related to traditional and historic land tenure and territoriality among the *Nuniwarmiut* are therefore best evaluated from a comparative perspective, using anthropological studies of other such societies as an analytical tool.

Lewis H. Morgan's (1877) reconstruction of social evolution provides a reasonable starting point for considering the question of land tenure and territoriality among hunter-gatherers because the European concept of "property" is central to his work. That is, Morgan's view was that during the earliest period of "savagery" (in which he placed many hunter-gatherer peoples) humans lacked any developed concept of property. As he put it:

> Their ideas concerning its value, its desirability, and its inheritance were feeble....Lands, as yet hardly a subject of property, were owned by the tribes in common, while tenement houses were jointly owned by their occupants (Morgan 1877:447).

Morgan's reconstruction held that the idea of property grew in concert with an increase in tools and utensils, and changes in social organization. Stated another way,

in his scheme hunter-gatherers were not considered culturally "advanced" enough to have such concepts as private property or land ownership (cf. Ingold 1987:134-135; Lowie 1928; Nadasdy 2003:225-229). But also, their supposed lack of cultural sophistication and civility meant that peoples placed on the 'savagery' rung of the social evolutionary ladder were felt to be predisposed toward hostile relations with other groups of their kind—hostilities that sometimes were tied to hypothesized disputes over land (i.e., "property"). These linked but conflicting presumptions are summarized by Hamilton as follows:

> The stereotypes about [hunter-gatherer] land-tenure systems held by western scientists during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are well known. Either people at this "low level of culture" were held to wander about with no conception of boundaries or territories or possession, or they were thought to be engaged in ceaseless bloody battles with one another for rights to their fiercely defended areas (Hamilton 1982:238).

Notions of property notwithstanding, the crux of a major problem with many efforts to define hunter-gatherer land tenure and territoriality is that, prior to about the 1960s, anthropology as a discipline tended to seek a "single descriptive model of hunter-gatherer social organization" (Kelly 1995:13). But a host of other conceptual problems bear on this subject, most of which are framed by the most basic of questions: that is, what are the defining characteristics of hunter-gatherer societies?

Anthropologists have had difficulty establishing firm definitional standards for hunter-gatherers as a category of study, particularly relative to such things as: social form and/or political organization (e.g., band, tribe, nation); degree of group mobility vs. sedentism; food storage capabilities; population density; and social stratification.

In fact, the great variations revealed by comparing human groups around the world that have been described as hunter-gatherers has led some researchers to suggest the hunter-gatherer category has become so problematic as to be useless to anthropologists today (e.g., Burch 1994:441-455; Ingold 1991; Kelly 1995:35; cf. Martin 1974; Myers 1988; Testart 1988). Such criticisms are not unjustified; however, unless and until suitable replacement categories have been defined and become broadly accepted within the discipline anthropologists will continue to utilize the term 'hunter-gatherer,' or its equivalents (e.g., "foraging" societies). The problem of defining hunter-gatherers is also somewhat tautological: i.e., people are defined as such partly on the basis of social organization even while researchers are constantly trying to determine what forms of social organization characterize hunter-gatherers. The term's overall applicability might be increased if it specifically emphasized the economic ways of life of the peoples designated hunter-gatherers, without imposing restrictions on group size, mobility, or specific forms of social or political organization among such groups. For instance, limiting definition of the term hunter-gatherers to refer to people who traditionally procured most or all of their food from hunting, fishing, gathering and trapping (cf. Kelly 1995:3; Lee 1998:166) would

reduce much of the confusion that has surrounded its use in the past. This would also bring the term back in line with its categorizing principle, which has to do with the economic/subsistence base—commonly presumed to be the most fundamental and therefore defining characteristic of a society.

Throughout the following discussion, the "northern" geographic interests of this study are unavoidably addressed in an admixture of information derived in part from studies of non-northern hunter-gatherers.

## General Background on Hunter-Gatherer Societies

In the highly influential book *Man the Hunter*, Lee and DeVore (1968) identified five characteristics of hunter-gatherer society as low population density, egalitarianism, a lack of territoriality, a minimum of food storage, and flux in band composition. This combination of characteristics is not surprising given the fact that most studies and models of hunter-gatherers have focused on small, patrilineally-based, Australian and/or African groups that lived in comparatively marginal environments, and were interpreted to be non-territorial even though recognized as having occupied and subsisted on particular tracts of land (some of which were very large) for protracted periods of time. As noted by Kelly (1995:14-15), "hunting and gathering as an economy came to be equated with the band as a social form" (cf. Burch 1988a:99-100; Helm 1965; Loyens 1966:80-82; Service 1966:7-8, 27-45); this has caused groups with higher population densities, greater social complexity and more

sedentary lifestyles to sometimes be excluded from discussion of hunter-gatherers. For instance, Service (1966:3) asserted that the Tlingit on North America's Northwest Coast "should be considered in the context of chiefdoms rather than bands or tribes." Lee recently defined hunter-gatherers in a way that would only continue this trend:

> *Economically* we are referring to those people who have historically lived by gathering, hunting, and fishing, with minimal or no agriculture and with no domesticated animals except for the dog. *Politically* gatherers-hunters are usually labeled as "band" or "egalitarian" societies in which social groups are small, mobile, and unstratified, and in which differences of wealth and power are minimally developed (Lee 1998:166).

Endorsing a definition of hunter-gatherers such as the above poses significant problems relative to classifying the economic and political organization of many indigenous groups. Some of those limitations are addressed in the passage that follows:

> Many societies which do not practice horticulture nonetheless show high levels both of sedentism and storage, while others have both suitable species and knowledge of techniques but neither store nor become sedentary. On North American coasts (California and Northwest), for example, were societies based on the intensive conservation of naturally occurring seasonal

> resources (salmon and acorns). Social characteristics of these societies fail to conform to the classic models of food collectors; sedentism was present, together with a high population density, social stratification, and in some cases even slavery (Hamilton 1982:233; cf. Kennedy and Bouchard 1990).

Most of these non-conformist groups now are widely recognized as "complex hunter-gatherers"; they stand in sharp contrast to the classic, "simple or nomadic style" of hunter-gatherers defined by Lee and DeVore. Some common characteristics of complex hunter-gatherers include "a relatively high degree of residential permanence, higher population densities, multi-seasonal food storage, competition over the rights to productive resource locations and accumulated surplus, status asymmetry, and organized warfare" (Fitzhugh 2003:2-3). A number of northern groups (e.g., Tlingit, Alutiiq [of Kodiak Island]) readily fit the definition of complex hunter-gatherers; but many Eskimo societies have a mixture of complex *and* simple hunter-gatherer characteristics—creating further classification problems (cf. Layton 1986). Calling to mind the "savagery-barbarism-civilized" scale of the social evolutionists, this raises the question of whether some sort of "mid-level" hunter-gatherer category should be recognized.

Also, whereas some researchers insist that hunter-gatherers are characterized by highly flexible social structures (see Lee 1976; Peterson 1979) others (e.g., Service 1962, 1966; Steward 1936; cf. Radcliffe-Brown 1930-1931) contend the fundamental

form of hunter-gatherer groups is based on exogamous, patrilocal bands (or "hordes") that individually hold rights to and exploit discrete, well-defined territories (Hamilton 1982:235).[6] Patrilineal kinship and patrilocal residence patterns may be typical of Australian and African hunter-gatherers, but they do not necessarily apply to other hunter-gatherers. More importantly for the purposes of this study, however, these markedly different perspectives on hunter-gatherers beg the question of how researchers interested in such societies have defined the closely related concepts of "land tenure" and "territoriality." The answer to this question is often unclear.

Kelly (1995:163) separates these concepts by stating that *land tenure* refers to the "different ways of regulating people and land," while *territoriality* "specifically means the exclusive use of a defended area" (cf. Casimir 1992:20; Ingold 1987:136). In these terms, territoriality could not have existed among hunter-gatherers whose customary areas of use were either (a) allowed to be accessed by outsiders or (b) not explicitly 'defended' against trespass. A rigid application of this definition would support the idea that hunter-gatherers were not territorial, because most groups had provisions that allowed for some degree of land/resource sharing with others and there are comparatively few accounts in the hunter-gatherer literature of actual hostilities between groups based on "boundary" intrusions.

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[6] Both schools of thought are primarily founded on Australian data (Woodburn 1980:96).

In contrast, Myers (1988) offers no definition for territoriality but insists it must be separated from land tenure. As he explains:

> The functional significance of tenure...can at least be regarded as distinct from that of territorial organization. Like any culturally constituted entity, place may enter into relations of exchange among persons, creating social relations that do not depend on physical co-presence. Such analyses emerge most clearly through an emphasis on the personal and individual process of tenuring, viewing relations to place in a life-cycle perspective, examining the intersection and mutual involvement of individual biographies through time...A person's identification with a place or places is a critical component of his or her social identity (Myers 1988:271-272; cf. Correll 1976; Krupnik et al. 2004).[7]

A more group-focused historical perspective on tenure is expressed in Rogers' (1963, 1972) work on the Mistassini Cree, among whom the principal economic units were identified as the "hunting group" and the nuclear family. However, the social unit most relevant to Rogers' discussion of land tenure is the hunting group—which is said to be "generally composed of from three to five nuclear families and dependants"

[7] Myers is not alone in advocating that anthropologists must devote greater attention to the complexities of hunter-gatherers' personal attachments to the land to better understand their lives and movements on the land. It may even be that "attachment to place" is a more useful concept than territoriality for describing human-to-land (and even human-to-human) interactions among hunter-gatherers (cf. Thornton 2008).

and constituted the "largest aggregate of individuals who co-operate with one another for any length of time" (Rogers 1963:54-55). Based on his Mistassini findings, Rogers (1963:82) described four systems of land tenure as theoretically possible in the eastern subarctic, depending on peoples' technological levels and environmental conditions. As seen below, these systems were seen by Rogers as occupying positions on a scale from highly territorial to non-territorial.

1) *Hunting Territory*: "where each hunting group habitually returns to a specified and delimited tract of land every winter. Members of the group have sole rights to the resources within the area, and trespass is resented and punished. Boundaries define the area";
2) *Hunting Range or Hunting Area*: "the group returns to the same general area every year but possesses no exclusive rights to the resources. The area has no sharply demarcated boundaries";
3) *Allotment System*: "involves a decision by the band chief or the elders each summer as to where the hunting groups will spend the winter";
4) *Free Wandering*: "each group acts independently of all others and moves freely without regard to other groups" (Rogers 1963:82-83).

Whereas the 'hunting range' or 'hunting area' system was considered by Rogers (1963:83) as being the most likely to have existed among the Mistassini "at the time

of contact," he contended "historical evidence shows that hunting territories developed recently" (Rogers 1963:77).

Yet another approach is represented in the work of Stanner (1965), who addressed land tenure and territoriality among Australian hunter-gatherers by developing the concepts of "estate" and "range." In his scheme, a 'range' is the actual area of land used by a group, whereas an estate "is the traditionally recognized locus ('country,' 'home,' 'ground,' 'dreaming place') of some kind of patrilineal descent-group forming the core or nucleus of the territorial group" (Stanner 1965:2). These concepts were recently employed to help explain nineteenth century territories among the Iñupiaq of Northwest Alaska by Burch (1998:309-310), who "[strengthened] the notion of "estate" to include the element of land ownership" (cf. Williams 1982:138). He also made the following points about these people:

- "Each of the Iñupiaq nations discussed in this volume both claimed and asserted dominion over a distinct territory having clearly defined borders" (Burch 1998:309).
- "Guests traveled openly and were greeted with feasts and entertainment. Trespassers moved about by stealth, and they were met by force" (Burch 1998:309).

- "An interesting feature of the Northwest Alaska situation is that many members of most nations regularly used parts of *other* nations' territories, at least some of the time, every year" (Burch 1998:309).

In Burch's conception of Iñupiaq territorial behavior, therefore, the first two points listed perfectly conform to the requirements for 'territoriality' identified by Kelly (1995:163), but the third describes a level of flexibility that clearly does not. Like Burch, I also find it interesting that the Iñupiaq groups in his study can, individually and collectively, be characterized as strongly territorial in their relationships with one another but, at the same time, annually allowed regular access to each others' lands and resources. While seemingly incongruous, these paired findings probably express a complex web of interconnections that existed traditionally between individuals of the different groups. That is:

> At any moment in time, an individual is affiliated with different kinds of social groupings. A person is simultaneously a member of a family, other kinship groupings, one or more bands, perhaps an age grade, a political group, and a linguistic group, to mention a few. If these different groups have geographic counterparts, then the negotiation of access to land and resources may take on a different character for one set of individuals than for another depending in part on the nature of the resources encompassed by these different levels of society (Kelly 1995:195; cf. Correll 1976:173).

Though the literature is rife with examples (e.g., Albers and Kay 1987; Hardesty 1977; Hitchcock 2005; Nuttall 1998; Watanabe 1972; Williams 1982), those above should sufficiently demonstrate that no universal system of land tenure and territoriality has been identified among hunter-gatherer societies. That being said, some attention must be given to efforts that have been made to explain hunter-gatherer behavior (e.g., land use, settlement, tenure/territoriality) in terms of evolutionary ecology and optimal foraging theory—both of which are primarily based on studies of non-human species.

The leading proponents of this movement were arguably Dyson-Hudson and Smith (1978; cf. Winterhalder and Smith 1981), while Martin (1983; cf. Cashdan 1983) was one of its first and most adamant critics. In essence:

> Evolutionary ecology predicts that territoriality will result when resources are sufficiently dense and predictable to make the cost of defense worthwhile, and where population is high enough that, for someone outside looking in, the cost of trying to acquire a denied resource is worth the potential benefit (Kelly 1995:203).

Thus, ecological factors are presumed to have center-stage in determining the nature of human-to-human interactions relative to land use. Andrews (1989, 1994) built her

argument for the existence of territoriality among the Akulmiut of western Alaska on this 'predictable resource' hypothesis (i.e., the "economic defensibility model"). In fact, she asserted that "Alaskan Eskimo socioterritorial organization can be explained by an ecological analysis of critical resource distribution and abundance" (Andrews 1994:89). Ecologically-focused studies of this sort have a tendency to obscure the historical context of cultural traditions related to land use and occupancy—especially with regard to intergroup relations. This is one reason I concur with the Scandinavian findings of Beach et al. (1992:88; cf. Barnard 1983; Cashdan 1983:54-55) that human territorial behavior "cannot be apprehended through narrowly ecological analyses."

Finally, related emphases on optimal foraging theory have typically analyzed hunter-gatherer land use and resource harvesting decision-making in terms of perceived biological/caloric expenditures and gains: i.e., energy costs required to pursue a given activity (e.g., for travel time from camp to a procurement locale) versus the potential energy benefits returned if the undertaking proved successful. Simplistically speaking, optimal foraging theory often appears to remove human culture from the equation; instead, human actions are explained in terms of biological or ecological considerations. From my perspective, such approaches are generally unsatisfactory for the study of human groups (cf. Hamilton 1983:59-60; Sahlins 1998). As seen below, Freeman (citing Kleivan [1964]) concisely made this point in his discussion of the biological concept of "carrying capacity."

> Another factor that is ignored in the concept of carrying capacity is the complex and vital component of human behavior. Not only is there continual innovation in process, but also the dynamic introduced by human choice often overshadows any apparent environmental considerations that appear compelling determinants of human behavior (Freeman 1984:47).

## Socio-Political/Socio-Territorial Organization

A key component of the tendency to associate hunter-gatherer sociopolitical organization with "bands" (e.g., Helm 1965; Service 1962) is the assumption that such societies are small in population size, highly mobile, and egalitarian in structure (Lee 1998). The equation of band organization with high mobility also implies use and occupancy of landscapes that lacked resource abundance and/or resource reliability: i.e., bands subsisted on relatively marginal lands where making a living was hard, uncertain work. Service (1966:7) expressed this sentiment as follows: "Simplicity and meagerness...are salient characteristics of [band] societies." Generally speaking, the anthropological literature suggests hunter-gatherer bands averaged about 20-50 members in size (though larger bands have been described), and membership was fluid (e.g., Lee and DeVore 1968).

Service (1962:181; 1966), at least, considered the band level of organization to mark the lowest stage in the evolution of human society; thus, in the context of social evolution, "hunter-gatherers" and "bands" were a natural fit. But the concept of band

is problematic in that a significant amount of variation in the definition of 'band' is present in the literature. Also, a number of different levels or types of bands have been defined (e.g., Damas 1969, 1972a; Helm 1968; Rogers 1969; Steward 1955).

For example, Steward (1955) classified Northern Athabascan groups into both "primitive bands" and "composite hunting bands" (cf. Service 1966:34-35). Groups Steward designated 'primitive bands' were thought to fit the traditional construct of the patrilineal band (e.g., small in size with membership based on kinship).[8] In contrast, a 'composite hunting band' could include several hundred people and was composed of "many unrelated nuclear or biological families"...integrated "on the basis of constant association and cooperation rather than of actual or alleged kinship" (Steward 1955:143, 150; cf. Helm 1965; Service 1962). Steward's claim that comparatively larger Northern Athabascan bands were organized on the basis of residence rather than kinship was challenged by Helm. Using data on Hare, Slavey and Dogrib Athabascans of Canada's Mackenzie River drainage, Helm (1965, 1968) provided strong evidence that, in fact, kinship was important in the organization of all bands, whether small or large (cf. Ellanna and Balluta 1992:120-121).

[8] The patrilineal clans reported for the Siberian Eskimos (e.g., Hughes 1984; cf. Schweitzer 1992) would presumably fit Steward's definition of 'primitive bands.'

Helm (1968) reported three types of socioterritorial groups among the Dogrib,[9] which she described and defined as follows:

- *Regional bands*, each of which could persist for many generations and was spatially tied to multiple settlements;
- *Local bands*, each of which persisted for a few years up to one or more generations and was spatially tied to a "nucleated settlement"; and
- *Task groups*, each of which had functional durations ranging from overnight to several weeks and was spatially tied to a specific site.

She further explained that the "focus of membership/focus of identity" within these three types of groups was either: (i) territorial range [regional bands]; (ii) specific resource or resource locales within the range [task groups]; or (iii) kinship [local bands]. Through kin linkages individuals could gain membership in all three types of groups (Helm 1968).

Considering Steward's treatment of Northern Athabascans from a somewhat different perspective, Loyens' data on the Lower Koyukon led him to conclude that one can:

> ...hardly speak without misgivings of "bands" as used by Steward (1955) and Service (1962) in reference to most of "the Athapaskans." The seasonal activities

[9] Helm (1972:76-77) later identified the "tribe" as a fourth type of socio-territorial group among the Dogrib.

> of the Lower Koyukon were such that they did not demand a frequent dispersal of the members. The men might leave, but the women and children stayed on in the semi-subterranean houses. Besides, the basic reliance on fish, rabbits, beaver and porcupine for sustenance did not require extensive wandering away from the camp (Loyens 1966:81).

Smaller than Steward's 'hunting bands,' the basic social unit of the Lower Koyukon was identified as a "camp" and defined as a small group of five or six related nuclear families and temporarily extended families "which remained relatively unchanged throughout the seasonal migrations dictated by the food quest" (Loyens 1966:80-82; cf. Scott 1988; Sharp 1977; VanStone 1979:34-36).

With specific respect to northern hunter-gatherers, the considerations noted above are just a few among many that make the concept of band difficult to support. In fact, as Burch has recently explained:

> A local family is what most students of hunter-gatherer peoples (for example, Helm 1965:375) have called a 'band' or, sometimes more specifically, a 'local band'...
>
> The local family was the primary 'segment' that made up the segmental societies in north-west Alaska...For most of the people most of the time, the local family was the basic unit of daily life. Indeed, most 'villages' were

> made up of members of a single local family involving perhaps a dozen to seventy-five people living in two to seven or eight houses...(Burch 1988a:99-100; cf. Burch 1975:237; 1980).

Burch's conception of the Iñupiaq "local family" is equivalent to the term "local group" or "village group" as applied to the Central Yup'ik (Fienup-Riordan 1984; Pratt 1984a:39-57; 2001; cf. Shinkwin and Pete 1984). The use of either of these designations is generally more appropriate to and consistent with the data concerning the socio-political/socio-territorial organization of many northern hunter-gatherers.

North American hunter-gatherer groups, in particular, have also often been designated "tribes"; but many of the problems with the term 'band' are applicable to the concept of "tribe" as well. Chief among these problems is inconsistent usage of 'tribe' and a plethora of variant definitions for the term (e.g., see Fried 1968). The definition of tribe offered below includes standard characteristics such groups are expected to have, and also touches on some inconsistencies in the term's past use.

> A tribe, in a political sense, is a group possessed of a name, a territory, and a group decision-making mechanism; it usually (but not invariably) acts independently and as a unit in matters of inter-group relations, such as war, migration, alliance, treaty, and land-cession. A tribe may consist of one or more communities. Community refers to that group which during some part

> of the year resides in a single village or agricultural settlement. This use of the word tribe is to be distinguished carefully from its looser, but common, employment to denote any ethnically distinguishable group ("nation," to use Kroeber's [1955] term), which may consist of several autonomous or completely independent political units (although ethnic and political boundaries in some cases do coincide) (Wallace 1957:304).[10]

To help illustrate other problems encountered with the concept of tribe it is worthwhile to present at least one more, markedly different definition. In this case, the tribe is defined as:

> A social group speaking a distinctive language or dialect and possessing a distinctive culture that marks it off from other tribes. It is not necessarily organized politically (Hoebel 1958:661).

Thus, to Hoebel differences in language or dialect were essential markers between tribes, whereas language was not even mentioned in Wallace's definition. Conversely, Wallace considered tribes to be political units, yet groups with no evident political organization could still be tribes in Hoebel's view. Such inconsistencies in definition underscore the difficulty of trying to envelop a broad spectrum of social

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[10] As Wallace (1957:304 [note 3]) remarked, "Kroeber [1955] refers to the smaller, one-community tribes as tribelets." It should also be noted that Burch (1998) recently resurrected the term "nation" as a designation for certain hunter-gatherer societies.

groups, scattered across large geographic areas and a diversity of environments, under a catch-all concept of human organization. If a concept must be continuously modified to account for variations between the peoples to which it is applied its relevance becomes suspect (cf. Timson 1973).

In fact, whatever theoretical utility the concept of 'tribe' may once have had with respect to northern hunter-gatherers has now been significantly eroded, especially in light of the current landscape of "tribes" in Alaska. In 1993 federal tribal recognition was summarily conferred on all 200+ Native villages identified in the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act—an unprecedented and purely political action. That is, Native populations in the "Lower 48" states that seek federal recognition as tribes must go through a well-established "tribal acknowledgement" process, in which evidence must be presented that demonstrates they satisfy the specific criteria historically used by the federal government to define tribes. Since federally-recognized tribes in Alaska were not subjected to this process[11] they are a somewhat different animal (although they have the same political meaning everywhere in the United States). The Alaskan case arguably constitutes the most far-reaching and deviant application of the tribal designation to Native peoples that has occurred in North America. It also clearly underscores the fact that governmental and administrative designations of "tribes" are markedly different from social scientific definitions, which occur in the context of trying to understand human social organization.

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[11] See Feldman (2001) for an exception to this statement.

Finally, North American groups like the Tlingit occupy an anomalous position with respect to hunter-gatherer socio-political/socio-territorial organization, which explains why they are often omitted from discussions of hunter-gatherer societies. Although anthropologists have consistently identified the Tlingit as a tribe, in fact, their highly stratified and complex society puts them on one extreme of the tribal spectrum. Keeping in mind the specific purpose of this study, details about Tlingit society are limited to those contained in the quoted passage that follows.

> ...the Tlingit had well defined conceptions of property and legal rights to territory. The clan or house group is an economic group in Tlingit society which, like a corporation in western society, controls the use of certain lands and other valued properties. The head of the clan or house group is the person directly responsible for administering the property, but according to custom, his rights are subject to certain restrictions. The most important of these are that (1) he cannot sell the right—though it may be transferred in legal settlement to another group, and (2) he must allow the use to appropriate members of his group. The fact of ownership is publicly announced at the dramatic potlatches in which the new owner—whether by inheritance or other legal means—establishes his title. These potlatches involve the whole tribe, and often members of neighboring tribes, and are such outstanding events in the lifetime of the individual that they are graven permanently upon the

> memory of the people. Yet this recording is often supported by another device, the carved totem pole on which property ownership is clearly indicated. Nowhere among unlettered peoples in North America was there so clear a recording of property ownership as among these Northwest Coast people (Goldschmidt and Haas 1998:16; cf. Drucker 1939).

To summarize the above, the range of definitions of bands and tribes in the literature enables researchers to designate any given group as one or the other, almost according to whim, and find support for their positions based on prior work.[12] As such, the theoretical merit of both concepts is questionable. Despite being restricted to just two concepts of hunter-gatherer socio-political/socio-territorial organization, the preceding discussion highlights some common difficulties anthropologists have encountered in efforts to define and categorize human territoriality (cf. Casimir 1992).

## Family Hunting Territories

With respect to the existence of concepts of territoriality and land tenure among hunter-gatherers, the first clear challenge to Morgan's model of social evolution was Frank Speck's (1915) finding that individual Algonquian families in northeastern North America held exclusive use rights to specific family hunting territories (Kelly 1995:182). Speaking mainly of peoples in Northern Quebec and Labrador, he

[12] For instance, as unlikely as it might seem, the Tlingit could potentially be designated a "regional band" using Helm's (1968) definition of that term.

asserted that "Indian tribes of eastern and northern North America did have quite definite claims to their habitat" (Speck 1915:289). His work indicated "that families and neighbouring peoples respected one another's claims, that trespass was a punishable offense, and that these hunting territories were inherited along family lines" (Nadasdy 2003:225). He argued that "such features characterize actual ownership of territory" (Speck 1915:289). In a later paper, Speck (1928) elaborated on the family hunting territory system and insisted it was aboriginal.

> We may define the family hunting group as a kinship group composed of individuals united by blood or marriage, maintaining the right to hunt, trap or fish in a certain inherited district bounded by some rivers, lakes or other natural landmarks.... With a few exceptions the whole territory claimed by each tribe was subdivided into tracts owned from time immemorial by the same families and handed down from generation to generation in the male line. The almost exact bounds of these territories were known and recognized, and trespass, which, indeed, was of rare occurrence, was summarily punishable (Speck 1928:327).

As a whole, Speck's conclusions about the family hunting territories were seen by one colleague as a critique of:

> ...one of the most widely accepted tenets of the older evolutionary school of social theorists, that in earliest times hunters and food gatherers recognized no ownership of the land from which they drew their sustenance, and that not until agriculture developed was the allotment of land regularized in customary law (Herskovits 1940:291, 294-295; cf. Feit 1986).

Ultimately, Speck's findings generated extensive controversy and anthropological debate. Two decades after initial publication of Specks's Algonquian data, Cooper (1939) published a paper supporting both the claim for family hunting territories among the Algonquian and the idea that the system originated in aboriginal/pre-contact (i.e., "pre-Columbian") times. This apparently inspired Speck, with fellow anthropologist Loren Eiseley, to offer an explanation for the development of family hunting territories. The pair interpreted the system as a:

> ...pattern which would seem to grow out of conditions promoting family isolation and a certain degree of permanency of residence in a particular territory, for only so can the family group develop patterns of ownership and attachment toward an individual tract of land. This, in turn, implies a highly localized and constant fauna to be exploited, and, in addition, a degree of limitation upon the number of such sites available; in other words, a population which has reached the point where the possession of such tracts has survival value (Speck and Eiseley 1939:279).

They also acknowledged extreme variability in a number of the "characteristic traits of the hunting territory system" as documented at the time, however, and an obvious need for further investigation of the subject (Speck and Eiseley 1939:280). In contrast, Hallowell (1949) emphasized the need for more detailed data on ecological considerations related to Algonquian hunting territories—particularly population dynamics, and the relative abundance and dependability of available faunal resources. He suggested the latter factor was perhaps the most critical in determining hunting territory sizes, but recognized that the existing data were not sufficient to prove that was actually the case.

But Speck's work also attracted more direct criticism, most notably from Eleanor Leacock. In a detailed study of the Montagnais, Leacock (1954:1) argued that the "hunting territory" concept was post-contact in origin, not a feature of aboriginal society (cf. Murphy and Steward 1956; Rogers 1963:89). She also concluded that actual land ownership did not exist, but usufruct rights did: "ownership" only came into play as a result of fur trade commodities and resources such as beaver (Leacock 1954:2). Leacock's data suggested that the "family hunting territory" defined by Speck was a customary use area...the "rights" to which eroded if the regular pattern of use lapsed; and, in fact, even customary/annual use of a 'family territory' did not make it rigidly off-limits for use by other people.

In a carefully constructed paper, Knight (1965) summarized the "two contending explanations of the so-called Algonkian family hunting territory system" as follows:

- The first explanation is based on works such as Speck (1915), and Speck and Eiseley (1939). It holds that the "system represents an aboriginal adaptive adjustment to the strategic resources of subarctic taiga. Given the supposed conservability of beaver, in an area where beaver were a major subsistence item, harvest on a sustained-yield basis would be advantageous in dampening the fluctuations inherent in subarctic hunting. Family hunting territories are said to provide the "private" control necessary for the development and maintenance of beaver conservation" (Knight 1965:27).

- The second position follows the work of Leacock. "She questions Speck's hypothesis, noting that family territoriality varies (in the eastern subarctic woodlands) within one biotic zone: that, indeed, its strength decreases outward from the center of the earliest and most intensive trade [Leacock 1954:6]. She holds that caribou and not beaver were the major food animals of the area. A shift from cooperative caribou hunting to individualized fur trapping and dependence upon trade foods allowed family self-sufficiency, while competition for fur resources fostered the development of family territoriality. Throughout, Leacock's thesis is that the rigidity and

exclusiveness of family territories is directly proportional to the degree of dependence upon the fur trade" (Knight 1965:28).[13]

Following the general framework suggested by Hallowell (1949) for an ecological analysis, Knight (1965) tested the divergent hypotheses of Speck and Leacock against fur trade data from Rupert House[14] and concluded that neither was adequate. He concluded considerably more "principles and factors" (including simply the "material conditions of life") had to be taken into account before valid explanations for the *development* of family hunting territories among the Algonquian could be offered.

Research on family hunting territories among the Wabanaki led Snow (1968) to conclude that the fur trade did not require a major shift in subsistence or 'hunting' orientations for the Wabanaki—not to the degree it did among many Northern Algonquians. The fur trade's advent simply caused the Wabanaki to intensify their beaver harvesting efforts...along the same river systems they had always been using. In effect, therefore, Snow provided some degree of support for both the Speck and Leacock hypotheses.

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[13] If Leacock's position is correct then the most 'territorial' groups would be those most directly involved in the fur trade; groups having more marginal involvement in the trade would be far less territorially-minded. But such a hypothesis cannot really be tested and demonstrated to be accurate unless comparable, detailed land use data (representing long ranges of time) are available for every one of the groups under study. That is, detailed data about group-by-group land use and settlement patterns would have to exist for periods prior to, as well as during, the fur trade—and those data would have to be measurable at the family level.

[14] A Hudson's Bay Company trade post located at the southern end of James Bay in Quebec.

The Northern Ojibwa were brought into the mix by Bishop (1970), who cited statements in traders' journals as evidence of land ownership and hunting territories among those people. The data presented by Bishop describe another case of variability with respect to how (and when) hunting territories may have developed in a particular geographical area. He ultimately concluded the fur trade was not as important in this process as the group's basic subsistence focus: that is, subsistence and environmental factors had to be considered in the development of hunting territories.

Finally, on the basis of fieldwork conducted among the Cree in 1968-1970, Feit (1982:387) concluded that "Waswanipi hunting territories are not...exploited exclusively by a single trapper, nor are they typically used exclusively by a stable group of closely related kinsmen." He further noted that, although for every hunting territory there is a recognized "owner":

> Any individual hunter may take game animals whenever in serious need of food, and any hunter may take smaller game animals anywhere on an occasional basis, that is, during a brief period. However, any intensive hunting of the major 'big game' wildlife species and therefore, in effect, any sustained or long-term hunting in an area, is always assumed only to be proper

> under the direction of the hunting territory owner or his delegate (Feit 1982:386).

These few examples illustrate the main divergences in anthropologists' views about family hunting territories in those regions where the system is acknowledged to have been present. Note that all of the regions in question are home to Athabascan-speaking peoples; this makes the virtual absence of family hunting territories among *northern* Athabascan peoples all the more significant (Nadasdy 2003:226; cf. McKennan 1959:128; Steward 1960). It also reinforces the fact that there is no universal system of human-to-land relationship practiced among hunter-gatherer groups (cf. Hamilton 1982:235; Wallace 1957; Williams and Hunn 1982).

## Land Ownership and Boundaries

As noted above, the question of whether or not hunter-gatherer societies traditionally had concepts of land ownership arose in concert with the late-19$^{th}$ century theory of human social evolution. The social evolutionists' denial of property concepts among hunter-gatherers meant such societies also did not have fixed territorial boundaries. Thus, in contrast to European land-holding systems, hunter-gatherers presumably did not partition the landscape between property owners and were therefore free to roam the terrain as they pleased.

This early, simplistic view of hunter-gatherers and their relationships to the land they inhabited eventually came under considerable criticism—not only relative to the accuracy of the social evolutionists' view, but also in terms of the possible motivations behind its development and broad acceptance. The three passages presented below exemplify such criticisms.

- Williams (1986:chap. 8) [argues] that European attempts to theorize property cannot be understood apart from the colonial project in which they were embedded. She argues that these theories were, in large part, explicit attempts to justify the expropriation of lands from Aboriginal peoples, especially in North America. Thus, Aboriginal peoples do not relate to the land in ways that Europeans recognize as constituting property relations precisely because these relations were defined in opposition to how Aboriginal peoples related to the land (or, at least, to how Europeans perceived them to do so) (Nadasdy 2003:232).

- In academic arenas, the claim for the aboriginality of Algonquian territories was interpreted as a challenge to the evolutionist view that hunting societies were based in communal property...The heat generated in academic debates, it seems, was mostly symptomatic of the ideological importance of private property in Euro-North America.

The significance of the 'private property' analogy in the policy arena related equally to this ideological circumstance. If Indians were seen as aboriginal proprietors of private grounds, 'farmers' of the beaver, it might enhance legitimacy of their territories in the eyes of Euro-Canadian policy-makers and administrators. Consistent with anthropology's separation of 'pure' from 'applied' research, the theoretical implications were unacknowledged in the scholarly publications of Speck, Cooper and others, despite their policy involvement (Feit 1986 [Scott 1988:44]).

- A common assumption about property rights among hunting-gathering peoples...is that access to land was relatively equitable and that hunter-gatherers, like other indigenous peoples, 'shared the land' with one another... Having access to the land or territories of other groups was seen as part of a system of reciprocity necessary to the long-term survival of groups and individuals. Ethnographic research among foraging groups that have been described as egalitarian, however, reveals that in fact individuals and groups had differential access to land and resources, depending on a whole series of variables, including kinship, age, social and marital status, language group affiliation, and personal and group identity (Hitchcock 2005; cf. Nuttall 1998:111).

The statement of Barnard and Woodburn (1988:15) that "The general principle in use of land is that access to resources in one's home area is automatic and unchallengeable" is obviously true. But it also is now broadly recognized as unreasonable to presume that any indigenous group occupied a landscape, no matter how potentially barren or forbidding, without forming an attachment to it that can be equated with some sense of "ownership." If one accepts the presence of land ownership among a group, by extension, some notion of boundaries on the land must also be accepted, even if they are not plainly evident (cf. Kelly 1995:185; Williams 1982:137).

As noted by Nadasdy (2003:230; cf. Anderson 1998; Scott 1988), certain hunter-gatherer ways of relating to the land may not satisfy western jurists conceptions of ownership, but they nevertheless create rights to the land and its resources that must be recognized. Williams (1982) has described an excellent example of such a situation for the Yolngu of Australia. In their system of land ownership: "Individuals call on a number of principles, all ultimately rooted in myth, to indicate their social identity, and these principles entail rights of access to resources and control over access" (Williams 1982:131). The various ways in which individuals were granted and/or could assert rights to certain lands and resources within Yolngu territory (e.g., Williams 1982:139-140) include at least one that deserves special mention. That is:

> The site from which an individual's spirit came to enter his mother and animate him while he was still a foetus may be grounds for transferring an interest in a small area of land, a parcel in or near that site (Williams 1982:139; cf. Kharyuchi 2004).

This is an example of rights to land and a way of relating to the land that most Europeans and westerners would have great difficulty accepting as valid. Perhaps more importantly, however, it is also the sort of concept or practice that few non-Yolngu would have the ability to discern. The veritable invisibility of such concepts to outsiders can easily lead to distorted images of aboriginal systems of land ownership and tenure. Similarly, certain details about such systems simply may not be explained. This point is made very clearly in the following statement concerning boundaries, per se:

> The fact that in particular instances people do not make boundaries precise should not obscure the fact that they have concepts of boundary, nor should it obscure the significance of the fact that in the past some may have been precisely recorded. Boundaries are, in general, only as precise as they need to be, and they may be precise or imprecise for a number of reasons. It should come as no surprise, for example, to a European who has owned a place of real property that if a person professes lack of precise knowledge about a boundary, or refrains from stating its precise details, this may reflect, or that

> person may intend it to convey, the message that relations between the owners on opposite sides of the boundary are amicable...Reticence to locate precise boundaries may even reflect concern about the consequences of doing so (Williams 1982:145-146; cf. Ewers 1974:11).

In many regions of the hunter-gatherer world the type of land tenure system that may come closest to describing traditional or aboriginal reality is usufruct: i.e., a form of "ownership" which develops, supported by custom, through constant use by members of the group (cf. Burch 1988a:98). In such a system, exclusive individual and/or group rights to land and the resources it held might develop; however, those rights could be lost to others if use of the area was interrupted or discontinued. An example from Greenland illustrates this point quite well.

> Access to the resources of local hunting and fishing grounds usually depends on affiliation to the local community. In Greenland there is a conflict between, on the one hand, an individual's right to hunt where he chooses, and on the other the right to hunt in an area as regulated by the community and where membership or affiliation to the community is a prerequisite. While there is extensive individual appropriation of resources and even individual custodianship rights to seal, beluga whale and salmon netting sites and to campsites, this is grounded within and dependent upon notions of collective appropriation and communal rights. The allocation of netting sites, campsites

> and storage sites to individuals is done on a communal basis. Individuals then have rights to exclusive tenure only so long as they continue to use those sites. In this way, sites can be inherited by the relatives of previous users, but the rights to tenure can be allocated to another person if use is discontinued by the present custodian (Nuttall 1998:111).[15]

Burch (1988a:98) acknowledges the possibility that a usufruct system may originally have existed in Northwest Alaska but asserts that, if that was the case, usufruct had been replaced by recognized societal ownership of lands by the early 19th century. Unfortunately, he does not offer an explanation for how or why this shift between systems might have occurred. The Iñupiaq societies in question reportedly had no doubts "about which society owned which land or about what the consequences of trespass were"—but they did not necessarily actively defend, and also allowed members of other societies to cross, the boundaries of their territories (Burch 1988a:98-99; cf. Ray 1967). Thus, Burch does not subscribe to the belief that boundary defense is a prerequisite for territoriality/land ownership (cf. Dyson-Hudson and Smith 1978; Kelly 1995:185; Lee et al. 1968:157).

Two primary means of excluding outsiders from access to a territory's resources have been described in connection with hunter-gatherer territoriality: "perimeter defense"

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[15] Nuttall's discussion of usufruct rights in Greenland concludes with the emphatic statement that, "In customary Inuit tradition, and also enshrined in the modern legal system, no-one in Greenland owns land" (1998:111; cf. Scott 1988).

and "social group defense" (e.g., Cashdan 1983:48-51). Generally speaking, areas where resources are dense and predictable are thought to give rise to perimeter defense—wherein the land-holding group marks the perimeter of its territory's boundaries in some manner and controls access to the territory space itself. Small territories and competition over resources are assumed in these cases. Conversely, where resources are sparse and unpredictable larger human territories develop, making perimeter defense unfeasible. This scenario gives rise to social boundary defense, where controlling access to resources is accomplished by controlling access to the social group inhabiting the area (Cashdan 1983:49-50; cf. Bishop 1983; Peterson 1975).

Returning briefly to the concept of perimeter defense, since most hunter-gatherer groups had low population densities and comparatively large territories physical defense of their perimeter boundaries was not plausible (Kelly 1995:203)...so social boundary defense must have been the norm. Additionally, the existence of a large territory would logically seem to restrict group members from traveling beyond its perimeters on any kind of regular basis (cf. Fowler 1982:120; Nelson 1982:217). These points indicate that the hypothesized correlation of large territory size with perimeter boundary defense should not be taken for granted.

The observation of Ingold (1987:133) that "little or no actual fighting need be involved" to establish boundary defense, however, is another way of saying that

anthropologists must look beyond the surface aspects of behavior to gain a clearer understanding of human territoriality. Recent research among the Cree (Scott 1988) and Evenki (Anderson 1998) are examples of anthropological attempts to explain hunter-gatherer systems of territoriality from considerably more "emic" perspectives (see also Myers 1986; Silberbauer 1994).

Scott's (1988) account of the eastern Cree indicates that long use of certain tracts of land by individual hunters has led to the development of a sense of territoriality, but it is something quite different from standard concepts of 'property' or land ownership. Rather, the combination of social relations, beliefs and values that define Cree hunters' personal relationships to particular lands is also the tool by which they evaluate the legitimacy of other people's rights to use of and claims to those lands (cf. Nadasdy 2003:235-236). Scott further explains that:

> The basic unit of land tenure among eastern Cree is a hunting ground or territory...used by an extended kin network comprising as few as two but as many as a dozen households in an actual production unit. As a production unit, it is permeable, often incorporating people who are primarily or seasonally affiliated with other grounds. The leader of the group is the steward of such a ground (Scott 1988:38-39).

It is the group leader's responsibility to recognize and "respect the intentions, needs, and capacities of other 'persons'—human, animal, and spiritual—if mind and world are to 'match'" (Scott 1988:39; cf. Nelson 1982:218). Thus, relationships between humans, animals and spirits are established and maintained by traditional "respect" practices which serve, over time, to tie individual Cree to particular sites and lands.

> To speak of Cree property, then—even 'communal' property—would be to gloss over the essential dynamic of the system. Customary rights in the land, living resources and products may be specified, but these relate to technical and political relations of managing and sharing resources—resources in which no one, in the last analysis, retains exclusive or absolute rights (Scott 1988:39).

A very similar situation has been described for the Evenki: i.e., "Knowing how to use the land and how to maintain a proper relationship with the sentient persons that one may encounter are necessary skills for gaining an entitlement to land" (Anderson 1998:75). For the Evenki:

> ...the concept of knowing persists both in the stories of people being able to rescue themselves from impossible circumstances created by poor weather, poor luck or bad drink and in the day-to-day obsession with performing tasks upon the land 'properly.' Knowing the land properly for these 'most-Evenki'

> herdsmen is what legitimized their right to take wood, water and animals from the land, whilst at the same time explaining their capacity to do so (Anderson 1998:69-70).

Among both the Cree and Evenki, therefore, use rights to specific territories and resources are based on individuals' lifetime relationships with those lands and proper behavior toward the sentient persons they contain. Neither Scott nor Anderson use the term "usufruct" to describe those systems, the implication being that once an individual's rights to use a certain territory and its resources have been recognized as legitimate they are never lost (cf. Burch 1988a:99-100). This raises an interesting question, however, given a system of beliefs in which successful harvests depend on an individual's proper behavior toward the non-human persons an area contains. That is, does bad or neglectful behavior toward an area's non-human persons sever an individual's relationship with those beings, and with the area? Similarly, in the face of such behavior would others continue to recognize the offending individual's rights to that specific territory and its resources?

Moving beyond the individual, the closeness of group-to-group relations is the central factor in determining territorial behavior between adjacent hunter-gatherer populations. This point is made in Kelly's discussions about the complexity of group affiliation in two Australian populations, which he summarized as "instances of a widespread (although not universal) pattern in hunter-gatherer land tenure: that

connections to land are social and permeable, rather than geographic and rigid, and that these connections have social and political in addition to ecological components" (Kelly 1995:188). Related comments by Hardesty expand on the subject.

> Even if a habitat or resource is 'owned,' boundaries are sometimes crossed with ease by other groups. Social relationships between groups are such that some groups interact more frequently and more intensely than others. Such groups are separated by 'loose' social boundaries and members may be frequently exchanged, either for purposes of marriage, visits, cooperation in subsistence activities or for a variety of other reasons. As long as the social boundaries between groups are loose, 'owned' physical space becomes more a theoretical concept than an expression of actual behavior. Consequently, resources or land belonging to one group can be used by others if the social relationships are sufficiently close to make the outsiders practicing, if not actual, members of the group. Of course, social boundaries may change and groups that are the same physical distance apart may feel that they belong to the same group at one time and very different groups at other times (Hardesty 1977:186; cf. Albers and Kay 1987:65; VanStone and Goddard 1981).

Provisions for allowing access to lands and resources that were recognized as belonging to certain individuals, families or groups are documented among hunter-gatherer societies around the world (e.g., Andrews 1989:437; Bishop 1983; Fowler

1982:117-118; Kelly 1995:198; Myers 1982, 1986; Silberbauer 1972:302-304; Wallace 1957; Wenzel et al. 2000). The following observation about North American Indian populations is probably applicable to hunter-gatherer societies as a whole:

> In general, when one begins to examine the ethnohistoric record from a regional rather than a tribally-based perspective, it becomes apparent that joint cooperation and sharing of land among ethnically-diverse groups was not exceptional (Albers and Kay 1987:72).

This passage calls to attention a weakness of many hunter-gatherer studies: i.e., they are often so group-specific in nature that it is difficult to evaluate how representative the associated findings are for other hunter-gatherer societies in the same or adjacent regions.

**Summary Observations**

Anthropologists' long struggle to construct a representative model of hunter-gatherer socio-territorial organization has demonstrated that none exists: no single model can bridge the many variations documented among hunter-gatherer societies worldwide (cf. Kelly 1995:13). This reality is most evident in the northern hemisphere.

All five defining characteristics of hunter-gatherer societies listed by Lee and DeVore (1968) are problematic with regard to northern hunter-gatherers because,

traditionally, many of the latter groups defied those standards. That is, social stratification rather than egalitarianism existed (e.g., Ahtna, Tlingit, Koniag, Aleut); notable resource surpluses and food storage are well-documented (e.g., Bella Coola, Yup'ik); high population densities and/or comparatively low degrees of mobility were not uncommon (e.g., Cup'ig [Nunivak], Yup'ik, Alutiiq/Koniag); pronounced territoriality occurred (e.g., Iñupiaq, Aleut, Tlingit); and the majority of groups had stable memberships and were not organized as "bands" (e.g., Lower Koyukon, Tlingit). Additionally, some northern hunter-gatherer societies practiced horticulture (e.g., Tlingit), others were centrally involved with animal husbandry (e.g., Evenki, Saami), and still others vested individuals with the equivalent of private ownership of certain resource sites (e.g., Ahtna [Allen 1887:49], Gwich'in [Lynch and Pratt 2009]).

Most of the groups cited above as exceptions to one or another of Lee and DeVore's characteristics of hunter-gatherer societies matched some of the other characteristics they listed: e.g., the Ahtna had a highly stratified society (e.g., Allen 1887:53, 59-61; de Laguna and McClellan 1981; Shinkwin 1979:26-27) but also comparatively low population densities and high mobility. Alternatively, some groups clearly lived a hunter-gatherer way of life but satisfy almost none of the classic characteristics of such societies; rather, they fit the definition of complex hunter-gatherers. Thus, the Aleut were evidently strongly territorial, with individual groups actively defending their lands against trespass (e.g., Maschner and Reedy-Maschner 1998); they also had resource surpluses and, at the time of Russian contact, both a class system and high

population density (e.g., Black and Liapunova 1988; Lantis 1970:242-272). The marked differences evident between northern hunter-gatherer societies and those of other regions with respect to mobility, food storage, population density, and social stratification are no doubt explained by multiple factors—but abundant marine resources and reliable runs of migratory fish (especially salmon [e.g., see Donald and Mitchell 1994]) may be chief among them.

In any event, to presume that all peoples who traditionally followed a hunter-gatherer way of life related to the land and resources of their respective living areas in the same way is to ignore human variation and cultural diversity (along with myriad environmental and ecological considerations); it would also implicitly endorse the 19th century cultural evolutionary model so popular among anthropology's founding fathers. It is similarly wrong to assume that the hunter-gatherer way of life has remained static throughout human history. This is one of several cogent objections raised by Hamilton, below, relative to anthropological analyses of hunter-gatherer societies in general.

> The study of foraging peoples has tended to proceed on the basis of a number of implicit assumptions. Although the postulated continuity with a past mode of adaptation seems to be a quasi-historical notion, the logic of the analysis nevertheless proceeds as if these societies really are outside history, and assumes that what people can be observed to do today (or in the recent past) is

> likely to be the same as what might have been observed of their ancestors' activities thousands of years before. It must be admitted also that a certain romanticism has surrounded the study of foraging peoples; for some, they have been taken to represent a kind of "golden age," an example of human existence free from the evils of class conflict, stratification, exploitation, and slavery. In this sense, they seemed to embody human possibilities remarkably different from those of recent times; nature was not as severe an obstacle to a collective, non-exploitative existence as most people supposed (Hamilton 1982:230-231; cf. Ellanna and Balluta 1992:5).

Few societies that could be termed hunter-gatherers today bear much resemblance to their ancestral or traditional form; most are not only far more sedentary but also far less reliant on hunting, gathering, fishing, or trapping for their survival (e.g., Watanabe 1972:480-482). For many northern hunter-gatherer groups, in fact, the dramatic changes in land ownership, settlement and resource harvesting patterns that occurred in the twentieth century significantly altered most aspects of traditional land tenure systems. Indigenous peoples have also been more fully incorporated into nation-states, which has subsequently resulted in the imposition of assorted laws and regulations affecting their ability to maintain customary land use practices (e.g., Bell and Asch 1997; Morrow and Hensel 1992). These circumstances dictate that contemporary studies of *traditional* hunter-gatherer territoriality and land tenure must primarily be focused on the past: that is, they must be treated as reconstructions.

Thus, future studies of northern hunter-gatherers must also specifically address the topic of *change*, and incorporate historical and archeological data in their interpretations (e.g., Campbell 1968; Griffin 2004) whenever possible.

# CHAPTER 3: CULTURAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT

The historic Central Yup'ik Eskimos represented a discrete social, linguistic and cultural unit among Alaska Native peoples. They are an ideal study population for anthropologists given their rich culture, vibrant language and status as the largest segment of Alaska's Native population. The following overview of the Central Yup'ik identifies the shared cultural traits that define them as an ethnographic unit of study, and provides important context for the close examination of the *Nuniwarmiut* presented in later chapters.

## The Central Yup'ik Eskimos

The Eskimo peoples of west and southwest Alaska are collectively known as the Central Yup'ik, so named on the basis of language.[16] One of three Yupik Eskimo languages spoken in Alaska (the others being Aluutiq and Siberian Yupik), Central Yup'ik is sometimes referred to simply as Yup'ik, with the apostrophe distinguishing it from other Yupik Eskimo languages (Jacobson 1984:1; cf. Hammerich 1960). Hereafter, when the designation "Yup'ik" is used it refers strictly to the Central Yup'ik people.

Divided into at least five separate dialects (see Jacobson 1984, 1998), the Central Yup'ik language today is spoken in about 70 villages, the vast majority of which are

[16] The apostrophe in "Central Yup'ik" signals a pronunciation feature, germination of the <p>; the correct plural of Yup'ik is Yupiit, but the singular form appears widely in the literature as the group designation.

located in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta of southwestern Alaska. But through about the mid-19th century speakers of this language occupied the coastline of western Alaska from about Nome south to the west half of the upper Alaska Peninsula (Figure 1; cf. Jacobson 1998:xiii). Their historic, inland range is more problematic but can be roughly delimited as follows: at or near the villages of *Kuiggavluaq* on the Unalakleet River, *Paimiut* on the Yukon River, and Aniak on the Kuskokwim River; the Wood-Tikchik Lakes area; and the entire Nushagak River drainage. The earliest Russian accounts describing the Native peoples of southwest Alaska recognized this entire territory as Yup'ik (Black 1984:22-23; cf. Kashevarov 1994; Woodbury 1984).

There is evidence that Yup'ik occupation of the central Bering Sea coast may have been more extensive in the late prehistoric period than it was by the turn of the 19th century (Burch 1984b:5 [note 5]; Krauss 1980:5-11; Woodbury 1984:52); this scenario might apply to the Yukon and Kuskokwim river valleys, as well. For instance, settlements bearing Yup'ik names are common in the historic territory of the Ingalik Athasbascans, which abuts the Yukon River boundary of the Yup'ik territory; the same is true of Koyukon Athabascan settlements situated along the Unalakleet-Kaltag Portage (Netsvetov 1984:495). This suggests Yup'ik groups, or mixed Yup'ik-Athabascan populations, may formerly have occupied those areas—though other explanations are also possible (e.g., Pratt 2005). Historic relations between Yup'ik and Athabascan peoples in southwest Alaska were remarkably close. Though relations with Athabascan peoples were not always amicable, extensive trade was

common and intermarriage also occurred (e.g., Loyens 1966:24, 27-29; Oswalt 1990:16-17; Townsend 1979:160-162; VanStone 1979:72; Wrangell 1970:59-61; Zagoskin 1967:243-244). Yup'ik-Athabascan territorial shifts and population

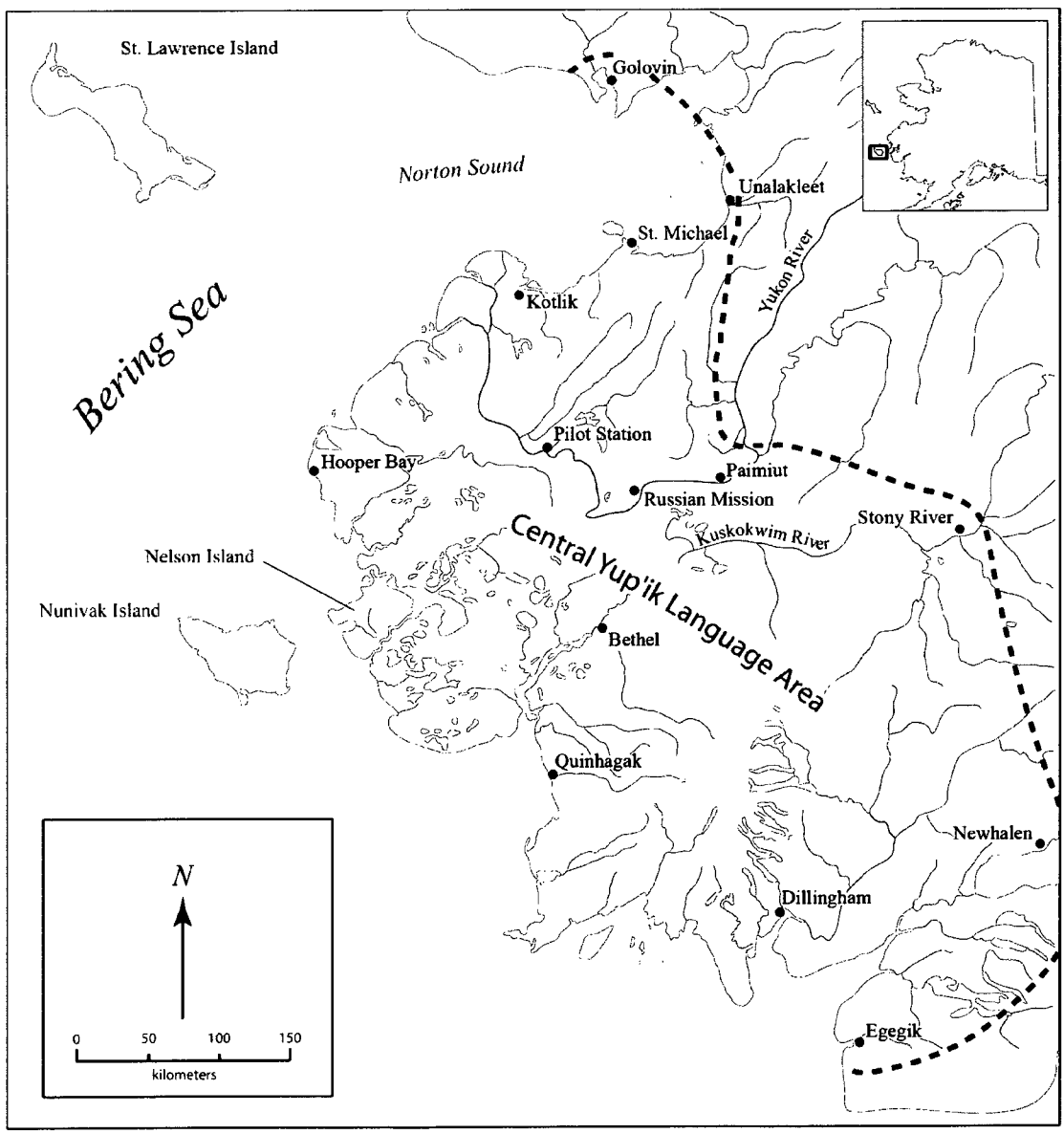


Figure 1: The Central Yup'ik Region

movements during late prehistoric times may partially account for the pattern of historic relations that developed between these societies.

Although language is the primary distinguishing feature, the Central Yup'ik have also been characterized as culturally distinct from other Alaskan Eskimo peoples on the basis of their traditional religious and ceremonial life, subsistence economy, social structure and organization. The most detailed, early ethnographic account about the Eskimos of the Bering Sea region (Nelson 1899:421-450) describes the "aboriginal purity" of the Yup'ik lifestyle compared with those of other Eskimo groups, and contends they also had the most elaborate ceremonial and religious life. In fact, their cultural development in this respect is unique among Eskimo peoples worldwide: they are considered to have had "more complex forms of social and ceremonial life than are found in any other region occupied by Eskimos" (VanStone 1984:208).[17]

In contrast to the long-standing, popular image of the Eskimo as a people who inhabited only the most marginal of environments, the diversity and abundance of subsistence resources in southwest Alaska was so pronounced that the Central Yup'ik were historically the most populous of any Eskimo group (see Fienup-Riordan 1990:6-9; Pratt 1984a:19-21). Oswalt's (1967:127-129) comparative analysis of

[17] This statement includes the Kodiak Islanders, at least with respect to ceremonial life. But also, although anthropologists have previously classified these people as "Pacific Eskimos," in their own conception of group identity contemporary Native residents of the island consider themselves to be Aluutiq, not Eskimo (e.g., see Crowell et al. 2001:70 [note #8]).

Eskimo economies led him to classify the Yup'ik as "Bering Sea Hunters and Fishermen," a classification shared with no other cultural group and accepted by other scholars with broad Alaskan expertise (e.g., VanStone 1967:xxii). The principal differences noted between the traditional subsistence economy of the Yup'ik and those of other Alaskan Eskimos included a greater reliance on salmon fishing; an absence of whaling (other than organized drives for beluga [belukha] whales); and the reduced importance of caribou hunting (e.g., Oswalt 1967:127-129; Wolfe 1979:113-116). But there were significant variations in the local economies of different Yup'ik groups as well (see Andrews 1989; Ray 1975:111-120; Wolfe 1979:177), with that of the *Nuniwarmiut* probably being the most diverse—as sea mammals, birds, caribou and salmon were all major components of their economy (e.g., Lantis 1946; Nowak 1988; Pratt 1990, 2001; VanStone 1989:1-15). Additionally, Yup'ik groups along the central Bering Sea coast between the Yukon and Kuskokwim rivers were far more reliant on sea mammal hunting than on salmon fishing; and caribou were very important to the Yup'ik peoples of the Nushagak River and Norton Sound.

Though quite pronounced in some cases, this variability in Yup'ik subsistence economies was largely offset by the high degree of mobility among these people and the existence of kinship relations, name sharing, ceremonial exchanges and trade between local groups (Fienup-Riordan 1984:69-75; 1990:153; VanStone 1984). On both local and regional scales, this allowed inland and riverine Yup'ik groups relatively easy access to coastal resources, and vice versa. The fact that members of

any given Yup'ik group were generally able to move freely through the areas of adjacent groups was partly due to the region's abundant resources—but it was also a product of traditional Yup'ik social organization (e.g., Andrews 1989:344-348). As noted by Fienup-Riordan (1984:68, 73-74, 78), however, the rich resource base in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta effectively made it unnecessary for groups that lived there to travel into the territories of other groups, in most years. But local resource failures sufficient to cause famines did occasionally occur, and at such times the ability to move freely into the territories of other groups could prove essential for survival.

With few exceptions (e.g., Burch 1980), Eskimos to the north of the Yup'ik are described as having had fixed territorial boundaries which were defended against intrusion by neighboring groups (Burch 1975:205-207; Ray 1967:373; 1975:103-109)—as did Eskimos to the south, who also had formal political bodies and systems of social ranking (Birket-Smith 1953:92-94; Townsend 1980). The traditional character of Yup'ik social organization is perhaps less well known, but they are widely believed to have lacked formal political authority or any centralized system of ranking (Lantis 1946:246-248; Fienup-Riordan 1984:69-70; 1990:198-205; Pratt 1984a:48-51; Zagoskin 1967:222-223). Further, warfare between Yup'ik groups is believed to have been primarily retaliatory in nature: i.e., it most likely resulted from specific acts of aggression by one group against another, not for the purpose of extending territories or defending boundaries (e.g., Fienup-Riordan 1990:153-161). Native intergroup hostilities—either threatened or realized—that occurred after ca.

1833 were probably all somehow associated with Russian presence in the region (e.g., Netsvetov 1984:160, 214, 238, 259; cf. Fienup-Riordan 1988:455-456 [note 10]).

Finally, there was at least one other major difference between Yup'ik societies and Eskimo societies to the north and south. Among the Yup'ik, "At the community level the extended family was residentially divided between a central men's house and one or more separate dwellings in which the women and children lived" (Fienup-Riordan 1990:199). This sexual division of communities was not found in other Alaskan Eskimo societies. Some of these other societies did not have "men's houses," and among those that did the structures were functionally different from those of the Yup'ik—as they did not serve as residences for men (e.g., Burch 1975:85-86; Clark 1984:191-192; Hughes 1984:265; Spencer 1959:187).

## Regional Contact History

The earliest known contacts between Central Yup'ik populations and Euro-Americans occurred as a direct result of the Russian fur trade; specifically, Russian efforts to expand that trade northward from the Gulf of Alaska and the Aleutian Islands. The initial dates and actual extents of Russian contact with these Natives varied considerably by local area; but residents of the coastal, central Bering Sea portion of the Yup'ik territory were clearly the last segment of this population to be contacted and also the least impacted (see Pratt 1984a:5-15; US BIA ANCSA 1995 (1):9-12). Sea-based attempts to contact the inhabitants of this section of the coast

were frustrated by the shallow waters, extensive tidal flats, strong winds, and frequent bad weather that characterize the area.

The first documented Russian contact with the Central Yup'ik occurred in 1779 at the northern limits of their territory, as evidenced by Kobelev's map of the Bering Straits/Seward Peninsula area (Black 1984:25). Circumstantial evidence (see Black 1984:27) suggests Russian traders probably had contact with Yup'ik people in the Alaska Peninsula and Bristol Bay areas by this same date; while those living in the Yukon and Kuskokwim river valleys evidently had no contact with the Russians until the early 1790s (Chernenko et al. 1967:9-10, 29-30). Russian coastal explorations in 1821-1822 led to brief contacts with indigenous populations on Nunivak Island and the lower Kuskokwim River (e.g., VanStone 1973).

Regular, more intensive interactions with Yup'ik peoples developed in step with the Russian establishment of four important forts and trading posts between 1819-1836: i.e., Novo-Aleksandovskii Redoubt (Fort Alexander) on Nushagak Bay [1819]; Kolmakovskii Redoubt (Fort Kolmakov) on the Kuskokwim River [1832]; Mikhailovskii Redoubt (Fort St. Michael) on Norton Sound [1833]; and Ikogmyut Station on the lower Yukon River [1836]. These endeavors provided the Russians with strategic geographic footholds and ultimately allowed them to greatly influence the flow of the Native trade in some areas (e.g., Black 1984:30-33).

Although Russian explorers and traders had penetrated the lower and middle stretches of the Yukon and Kuskokwim rivers prior to 1840 (e.g., Kashevarov 1994; VanStone 1959), the 1842-1844 interior explorations of Lieutenant Lavrentiy Zagoskin (1967) provided the first extensive data on the Yup'ik residents of these river systems. Shortly thereafter Russian priest Iakov Netsvetov (1984) began two decades of service among the lower Yukon River Yup'ik; but the Russians evidently never made contact with Yup'ik inhabitants of either the central Bering Sea coast south of the Yukon and north of the Kuskokwim, or the vast tundra expanses lying to the east of this coast. The first documented contact with those populations occurred in the winter of 1878-1879, when American naturalist Edward Nelson (1882) traveled through those areas making natural history observations and collections for the Smithsonian Institution. Based at Fort St. Michael, Nelson made several other trips through Yup'ik country prior to his 1881 departure from Alaska.

The year 1885 marked the beginning of a period of intensive culture contact and extensive culture change affecting all Yup'ik groups of the region. By that date, Protestant Moravian missionaries had arrived in the Kuskokwim River area; and by 1900 the region had seen the arrival of Roman Catholic (Jesuit) priests, missionary schools, commercial mining activities, and the Western educational system. After 1900, the rates of contact with and change among the Central Yup'ik accelerated steadily with each passing decade.

**Ethnographic Data on Historic Land Use and Social Relations**

Individuals involved with early Russian trading enterprises or associated explorations in the region often recorded ethnographic details about the Native people, and several of their accounts have been translated and published in English. The ethnographic data provided are limited (in breadth and quantity), but these works are important because they concern Yup'ik populations that were largely unknown at the time the respective expeditions occurred. The most notable of these accounts are the journals of Andrei Glazunov (VanStone 1959; cf Kashevarov 1994), V.S. Khromchenko (VanStone 1973), Petr Korsakovskiy and Ivan Vasilev (VanStone 1988).

The first substantive ethnographic work among the Yup'ik was tied to the 1842-1844 expedition of Lavrentiy Zagoskin into the Yukon-Kuskokwim region.[18] His account (i.e., Zagoskin 1967) is a geographical or ecological outline of the Yukon and Kuskokwim river valleys, per se; but it is also a rich source of data about early contact period Native life and contains particularly valuable observations on Native settlements, trade and intergroup relations (e.g., Pratt 1984b:48-49). This reflects Zagoskin's mission to gather information useful to further expansion of the Russian fur trade.

[18] The earlier work of Glazunov may have been equally substantive; however, since only a portion of his journals are published (e.g., Arndt 1996:37 [note 17]), there is presently no objective way to evaluate this possibility.

The journals of Russian priest Iakov Netsvetov (1984) constitute another rich source of ethnographic information about the Central Yup'ik. Though essentially limited in geographic scope to the lower Yukon River, Netsvetov's journals span a period of nearly 20 years and are enhanced by the fact that he learned the Yup'ik language during his tenure in the region. Combined with the time-depth of his observations, the priest's religious duties and repeated journeys between the villages of his district explain the quantity of data he recorded on Native daily life and social organization (e.g., kinship and family relations) compared to the earlier work of Zagoskin. Unlike Zagoskin, however, Netsvetov often did not provide names for the Native settlements he visited—much less descriptive information (e.g., number of houses/residents, type of site) about those places.

Work performed in connection with the Western Union Telegraph Expedition of the mid-1860s also generated some information about Yup'ik land use and social relations, but the geographic focus was limited to the Yukon River and Norton Sound areas. William H. Dall (1870, 1877a) is the principal source for the data gathered by the telegraph expedition, but some of his findings are highly suspect (cf. VanStone and Goddard 1981:561). Yup'ik groups occupying the coastal stretch between the Yukon and Kuskokwim river mouths and the interior of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta proper remained virtually unknown through the end of the Russian era, in 1867.

The lack of knowledge about more isolated Yup'ik groups on the Yukon-Kuskokwim mainland finally began to change with the aforementioned 1878-1879 winter sledge journey of Nelson (1882 [cf. O'Leary 2009]). This journey contributed much to his subsequent monograph (Nelson 1899), which is arguably the single most valuable source of ethnographic information available about the Central Yup'ik Eskimos. Though he did not have contact with some of them (e.g., *Nuniwarmiut*, Bristol Bay Yup'ik) Nelson was the first to present ethnographic data about Native groups across the entirety of the Yup'ik region (cf. Burch 1984b:9-10). Nelson's scientific curiosity about the natural and cultural world is evident in his detailed descriptions of the lifestyles, ceremonies and material culture of this region's indigenous peoples.

The infamous census taker Ivan Petroff (US Census Office 1884, 1893) drew heavily on Nelson's work but also contributed new data about the Yup'ik; however, Petroff's known lapses of integrity demand that researchers scrutinize his work very carefully (e.g., Black 1981; Pratt 1997). A small amount of published ethnographic data about the Yukon Eskimos derived from the early 1880s explorations of Johan Jacobsen (1977) and the 1926 archeological surveys of Ales Hrdlicka (1930). A 1927 visit to Nunivak Island by Edward Curtis (1930) yielded information about Native life there, and important contributions to Central Yup'ik ethnography also resulted from the 1930s work of educator Clark Garber (1934, 1935, 1947). Most other ethnographic data on Yup'ik groups prior to about 1935 are tied to evangelical enterprises and

much of it can only be accessed through archival research, but several exceptions warrant mention.

Moravian missionary John Kilbuck (Fienup-Riordan 1988) gathered a large volume of data concerning the Yup'ik of the lower Kuskokwim River drainage; and he also presented interesting observations about Yup'ik social groups in the region as a whole (see Fienup-Riordan 1988:4-5, 456-459 [notes 13-23]). His accounts span a period of 15 years (i.e., 1885-1900), are similar in content to the journals of the Russian priest Netsvetov, and reflect Kilbuck's ability to speak the Yup'ik language. Also, valuable information about Yup'ik groups on the coast between the Yukon and Kuskokwim river mouths was compiled in an 1891 census taken by the Catholic Jesuit priest Aloysius Robaut (Fienup-Riordan 1984); and ethnographic data on the Kuskokwim Eskimos were collected in the 1920s by Moravian missionary Arthur Butzin (Fienup-Riordan 1992).

Euro-American contacts had brought about many changes in Central Yup'ik life by the 1930s—with the major instigators being introduced religions (e.g., Flanders 1984) and infectious diseases such as smallpox, measles, influenza and tuberculosis (see Mason 1975a, 1975b; Oswalt 1990:145-146; Pratt 1984a:19-21, 127-131; 1997:21; Wolfe 1982; cf. Napolean 1996). Significant changes notwithstanding, however, Yup'ik people retained their languages and the character of Yup'ik life on the land remained comparatively stable well into the 20$^{th}$ century. That is, the annual cycle of

Yup'ik life continued to revolve around subsistence hunting, fishing and gathering activities.

Virtually all of the early works identified above were associated with the fur trade, scientific explorations and/or the process of missionization. For most such efforts the collection of information about Central Yup'ik land use patterns and intergroup relations was a secondary objective, desirable only insomuch as it forwarded the specific agenda or official mission of the collector. This pattern changed with Margaret Lantis' 1939-1940 fieldwork on Nunivak Island, which resulted in the first anthropological monograph (i.e., Lantis 1946) published on a Central Yup'ik group—the *Nuniwarmiut*. Among other subjects, the account is rich in detail about *Nuniwarmiut* land use, subsistence practices and social relations. Building on her earlier work, Lantis periodically returned to Nunivak to conduct further ethnographic research, some of which included forays into the Nelson Island and lower Kuskokwim River areas (see Lantis 1953, 1959, 1960, 1972).

The next noteworthy contribution to regional ethnography is represented by a short paper written by the trader Frank Waskey (1950), who lived in and traveled throughout southwest Alaska for many years. It is a "recollection" of ethnographic and historical details about the Yup'ik people accumulated during his long tenure in the region. Waskey wrote his paper at the urging of anthropologist Ivar Skarland, a close personal friend (Wendell Oswalt, personal communication [11 January 1983]).

After 1960, a number of anthropological studies (many organized around historical or ethnohistorical methodologies) were published that greatly enhanced the literature on Yup'ik land use patterns and group relations. Wendell Oswalt and James VanStone led this movement, and both made extensive use of archival records in their publications. Oswalt (e.g., 1962, 1963a, 1963b, 1980a, 1980b, 1990; cf. Oswalt and VanStone 1967) primarily concerned himself with the Kuskokwim drainage, whereas the areas of greatest interest to VanStone (e.g., 1967, 1968, 1970, 1972, 1978, 1979) were Bristol Bay and the Yup'ik/Athabascan contact zone along the Yukon (cf. Pratt 2005).

Contributions to this subject have also been made by the following anthropologists: Thomas Correll (1972) and Dorothy Jean Ray (1966, 1975) for the Norton Sound vicinity; Robert Wolfe (1979, 1981) and Dennis Griffin (1996) for the lower Yukon; Ann Fienup-Riordan (1983) for Nelson Island; Griffin (1999, 2001a, 2004) and Pratt (1990, 2001) for Nunivak Island; and Elizabeth Andrews (1989, 1994) for the "Big Lakes" area. A number of relevant works more regional in scope have also been completed (e.g., Black 1984; Fienup-Riordan 1982, 1984, 1986; O'Leary 1999; Pratt 1984a, 1984b; Shinkwin and Pete 1984; Wolfe et al. 1984), including several specifically concerned with oral accounts about Yup'ik warfare (i.e., Fienup-Riordan 1990:144-166; Kurtz 1985; O'Leary 1995; cf. Black 1981; Burch 2007b).

## Socio-Territorial Considerations

Traditionally, the largest cohesive social unit of the Central Yup'ik was what is best termed the "local group," a somewhat fluid organization of one or more extended families that lacked any formalized leadership position and was centered around a winter village (e.g., Fienup-Riordan 1984:65-68; 1988:466 [note 61]; cf. Zagoskin 1967:103, 209).[19] Each local group was economically self-sufficient, as was every extended family unit within the group (e.g., Fienup-Riordan 1984:64). The members of each local group followed a subsistence lifestyle that, depending primarily on resource availability, involved moving between two to five different residence localities over the course of the year. The most populous locales were winter villages, which generally were occupied by two or more extended families, for up to six months at a time, and averaged between about 25-100 residents. Some historic winter villages are thought to have accommodated 200-400 people, but they were not common. As might be expected, the coalescence of scattered family units into larger groups at this time of the year dictated that winter was also the heart of the traditional ceremonial season (Nelson 1899:357-393; cf. Mather 1985; Morrow 1984).

Some "winter" villages were actually occupied year-round and many sites that have been described in the literature as summer camps, for example, were formerly (or later) occupied during other seasons...and even as winter villages. Viable campsites

[19] For a detailed analysis of the problems faced in classifying pre-1900 Central Yup'ik social units see Pratt (1984a, 1984b; cf. Daugherty 1984:28-33; Fienup-Riordan 1988:453 [note 13]).

situated within the geographic universe of a given local group were not necessarily occupied on an annual basis, and the familial composition of their residents could vary as well.

Besides winter villages, the only other settlements that might normally be occupied by multiple families were especially productive spring or fall sealing and summer fishing or caribou hunting camps (cf. Fienup-Riordan 1988:466 [note 61]. Thus, for roughly half of every calendar year the people affiliated with a given winter village were dispersed across the landscape in individual (nuclear or extended) family units. Virtually every family had camps to which it claimed ancestral use rights, often dating back for generations. These patterns of Yup'ik land use are well documented (e.g., Andrews 1989; Fienup-Riordan 1982, 1984; Lantis 1946; Oswalt 1967; Pratt 1984a:16-35; VanStone 1967:122-130; Wolfe 1979, 1981).

Subsistence and settlement patterns stayed essentially as described above throughout the region until at least 1920; however, by about 1950 nearly every Yup'ik (local) group had been compelled to occupy centralized villages to accommodate the Western educational system. This process of centralization led to significant changes in population distribution and customary patterns of land use, including permanent abandonment of many otherwise viable villages and camps and a decrease in mobility on the family level (e.g., Pratt 1991:28).

## Local and Regional Group Identification

Speaking of Eskimo inhabitants of "the lower valleys of the Yukon and Kuskokwim and the shores of Bristol Bay" (i.e., the Central Yup'ik), Zagoskin made the following observation:

> The natives of this area are named for the settlements in which they live. In addition, they subdivide themselves into groupings on the basis of place-names or nicknames which indicate either the existence of intertribal disputes which obliged the weaker or vanquished members to be displaced, or the migration of groups due to an increase in their numbers, or, simply, different lines of descent within a given tribe (Zagoskin 1967:209).

The assertion that individual identity was based on one's home village is correct; however, Zagoskin (1967:209-211) delineated Central Yup'ik *groups* primarily on the basis of material culture and referred to them with "local names" (e.g., "Kvikhpagmyut" [*Kuigpagmiut*]) that had no correspondence whatsoever with settlement names. A tedious review of Zagoskin's journal might reveal certain place names or "nicknames" associated with particular populations, but since he visited only part of the region (Pratt 1984a:109, 120 [note 13]) he was not able to identify major villages affiliated with each designated Yup'ik group.

About 40 years later, Nelson (1899:24) remarked that "Although the aborigines living along the American coast from Point Barrow to Kuskokwim river are not separated by physical barriers, they are divided into groups characterized by distinct dialects." Here, Nelson was speaking of the split between the Iñupiaq and Yup'ik languages. But he proceeded to state that "There are few places among the different divisions of the people living between Yukon and Kuskokwim rivers where a sharp demarcation is found in the language as one passes from village to village" (Nelson 1899:25). Despite this remark, linguistic differences were apparently the means by which Nelson differentiated Central Yup'ik groups in the Yukon-Kuskokwim region. While even subtle linguistic differences can be markers of distinction between populations, Nelson did not indicate if his differentiations of Yup'ik groups were based on Yup'ik testimony.

But even if his report that few sharp breaks in language occurred in the region is accepted as accurate, it is hard to imagine that Nelson had the necessary linguistic skills to accurately make such determinations (cf. Pratt 1984a:68-74)—or that he spent adequate time with each "tribal" group to do so. It is equally difficult to accept his implication that few dialectal differences existed between the region's Yup'ik populations ca. 1880. Zagoskin (1967; cf. Pratt 1984a:111-121; 2008) offered ample evidence that considerable linguistic diversity existed in western Alaska, generally, in the early 1840s; and that surely must have been the case in the Yukon-Kuskokwim region, specifically (cf. Waskey 1950:1). The region's contact history suggests it is

very unlikely that extensive language homogenization occurred there between 1840 and 1880. The fact that oral testimony gathered a century later from Yup'ik elders (Polty et al. 1982a) of the lower Yukon River identified several now-unrecognized dialects or subdialects that existed in the region before the language "merged" makes such homogenization even more unlikely.[20] In any event, the works of modern linguists (e.g., Jacobson 1984; 1998:xii; Woodbury 1984:52) indicate Nelson's portrayal of Central Yup'ik divisions was not an accurate linguistic grouping (cf. Pratt 1984a:73-75).

The preceding remarks hint at several pervasive problems concerning group identifications in the historical literature. One is that reported Yup'ik group names nearly always originated from Native sources, sometimes from the very people to whom a name referred but often from neighboring peoples. The name applied to a given group might be based on: (a) that of its principal settlement (e.g., *Pastuligmiut*); (b) the territory it occupied (e.g., *Qip'ngayarmiut* [after the river *Qip'ngayaq*]); or (c) its location relative to a speaker's own group (e.g., *Cenarmiut* ["coastal people"]). Unfortunately, the individuals who recorded such names (e.g., Zagoskin, Nelson) usually did not know the actual meaning of the designations, or understand the contexts in which they were or were not used. Cultural preferences about specificity and generalization (e.g., Morrow 1995:45-46) may also have contributed to the

[20] Native oral history lies almost everywhere beneath the surface of this study, but only accounts that help make specific points or clarify details of a given discussion are individually cited.

inconsistency in Yup'ik group names documented in the literature. Due to factors such as these, a multitude of designations was potentially applicable to any given Yup'ik population (Fienup-Riordan 1984:70 [note 4]; cf. Shinkwin and Pete 1984:96-99).

In effect, the Central Yup'ik groupings produced by Zagoskin and Nelson were broad, geographic classifications that cannot be treated as valid maps of 19th century socio-territorial divisions among those people (Fienup-Riordan 1984; Pratt 1984a, 1984b). Efforts to identify traditional and/or historic Central Yup'ik groups were later undertaken by Fienup-Riordan (1984) and Shinkwin and Pete (1984): both studies improved the earlier tribal maps, but they are similarly problematic and inconsistent. Since there are no written critiques of these works some of the problems they contain merit attention at this point.

In Fienup-Riordan's (1984) view, at the time of European contact (ca. 1833) Central Yup'ik "village groups" were unified by:

> ...exchanges of food, women, names, feasts and visiting...into at least twelve larger, more comprehensive regional confederations, which confederations joined in offensive and defensive action against each other during the prehistoric period (Bow and Arrow War period). These regional confederations of village groups are what have until the present been

> identified as "regional groups." However, contrary to what has been implied in the literature (Zagoskin 1967; Nelson 1899; Oswalt 1967), although ideologically and socially bounded, these confederations were not distinct politico-territorial collectivities, but rather regional designations implying a potential alliance between more precisely definable village groups (Fienup-Riordan 1984:64).[21]

Citing the *Kusquqvagmiut* confederation as an example, Fienup-Riordan (1984:91 [note]) acknowledged that "finer group distinctions probably existed...than have been positively identified at this time" (cf. Fienup-Riordan 1988:456-457 [notes 13, 15], 459 [note 23]; Shinkwin and Pete 1984:96-99). The 'finer distinctions' to which she referred are presumably equivalent to the "village groupings" reported in 1891 by Father Aloysius Robaut for the coast between the Yukon and Kuskokwim rivers (Fienup-Riordan 1984:65-68). Each of Robaut's groupings was explained by Fienup-Riordan (1984:66) as representing "the number of people who considered themselves part of one social group and whose boundary involved more than a single place of residence in its definition." I do not dispute her explanation, but the value of Robaut's groupings would be more obvious if Fienup-Riordan (1984:91-93) had shown how they fit within the larger confederations ["regional groups"] she delineated (e.g., see Kashevarov's [1994:339] description of the *Kuigpagmiut*).

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[21] Some of the points contained in this quotation are clearly attributable to Wolfe (1979:26).

Similarly, although Yup'ik populations along the Yukon River were collapsed into a single regional group (the *Kuigpagmiut*) in her scheme, Fienup-Riordan (1984:92) suggested they traditionally comprised "at least two relatively independent confederations (i.e., Kuigpagmiut (people of the main river) and Kuikluyagmiut (people of the south mouth))"...each of which she said probably "spoke a distinct subdialect of General Central Yup'ik" (cf. Fienup-Riordan 1988:456-457 [note 14]; Zagoskin 1967:209-210). In contrast, Shinkwin and Pete (1984:97 [Table 1]) separated the Yukon River populations into four societies (cf. Burch 2005:38-40) analogous to Fienup-Riordan's regional groups; but they were not separated on the basis of linguistic differences.

Other notable inconsistencies between Fienup-Riordan (1984) and Shinkwin and Pete (1984) reflect either alternate views about the limits of specific group territories, or differences of "scale" relative to particular groupings. These include the following:

- Fienup-Riordan lumped the *Qissunamiut* and *Naparyaarmiut* into one regional group [the *Askinukmiut*], whereas Shinkwin and Pete treated them as separate groups (cf. Fienup-Riordan 1988:457-458 [note 17]; Woodbury 1984:52);
- The area from the Black River to Cape Romanzof was occupied by the *Marayaarmiut* according to Fienup-Riordan; but Shinkwin and Pete designated two separate groups for this area, the *Marayaarmiut* and *Qip'ngayarmiut*;

- Fienup-Riordan suggested the *Akulmiut* were a displaced *Kuigpagmiut* group, traditionally located between the Yukon mouth and the Askinuk Mountains; however, Shinkwin and Pete located this group much further to the south and associated it with the *Kusquqvagmiut*, not the *Kuigpagmiut*. This particular inconsistency may be the result of different applications of the same "relative" group designation (i.e., *Akulmiut*, "people/residents of the midsection") to inhabitants of areas lying between *different* major topographical features (e.g., the Yukon River and the coast, the Yukon and Kuskokwim Rivers), rather than to presumed historic shifts in the territory of a specific social group (cf. Andrews 1989:79 [note 1]; Fienup-Riordan 1984:70, 93; 1988:457 [note 14]; Kashevarov 1994:334; Waskey 1950).

These authors' mutual designation of the *Pastuligmiut* as a *regional* group is also problematic, as it is more appropriately described as a local group...organized around a single winter village (*Pastuliq/Pastuliarraq*).[22] At the regional level of organization, the *Pastuligmiut* were a unit of the *Kuigpagmiut* (cf. Wolfe 1979:24-28)—a fact made abundantly clear in oral history narratives recorded about the so-called Bow and Arrow Wars.

Shinkwin and Pete's (1984:97 [Table 1]) designation of the *Qip'ngayarmiut* ("People of the Black River area") as a contemporary society also seems unjustifiable, as there

[22] The same criticism applies to Shinkwin and Pete's listing of the *Qissunamiut* and *Naparyaarmiut* as regional groups.

has not been an occupied winter village anywhere along the Black River since at least ca. 1950. Although a major summer fish camp continues to be annually occupied near the river's outlet on the Bering Sea coast, the people who camp there are members of two other contemporary societies named by Shinkwin and Pete: the *Marayaarmiut* and *Kuigluarmiut*. Additionally, their determination that the *Unalirmiut* were an extant Yup'ik society as of 1983 (Shinkwin and Pete 1984:97 [Table 1]) is not defensible. Shinkwin and Pete's informants may have identified the *Unalirmiut* as a Yup'ik society, but there is considerable evidence that the Norton Sound area villages associated with that society had become affiliated with Iñupiaq peoples well before 1900 (see Ray 1975:128-139; cf. Correll 1972; Ganley 1995; Nelson 1899:24-26; Polty et al. 1982a; Pratt 2005; Woodbury 1984:52).

Finally, Fienup-Riordan's (1984:92; 1988:458-459 [note 22]; cf. Griffin 2004:71-73) claim that Zagoskin considered the *Nuniwarmiut* to be "a displaced population of the Aglurmiut" totally misrepresents his remarks on the topic. In actuality, Zagoskin (1967:210-211) explicitly opined that the alleged *Aglurmiut* migration to Nunivak was "a pure guess, or a legend."

As a whole, these criticisms of the Fienup-Riordan and Shinkwin and Pete studies underscore the fact that data limitations continue to impede efforts to accurately

describe and delimit 19th century Central Yup'ik Eskimo groups.[23] They also show that researchers concerned with this problem have often described social units of different scales under identical group names, making comparison of their respective findings difficult. To facilitate such comparisons, future researchers must explicitly define the social units they describe and refer to them using a consistent terminology.

It is clear that 19th century Yup'ik groups did not conform to the anthropological concept of "tribes" (see Pratt 1984a:36-48; cf. Jacobson 1998:xii), even though classic sources described them as such (e.g., Dall 1870, 1877a; Nelson 1899; Oswalt 1967; Waskey 1950; Zagoskin 1967). Considered collectively, past anthropological efforts to reduce the resulting confusion conceivably support a two-tiered hierarchy of Yup'ik social units above the nuclear family level. Listed in ascending order, these units are most appropriately labeled local groups and regional groups/societies (cf. Wolfe 1981:244); they can be defined as follows.

Local group: an assemblage of relatives who considered themselves part of one social group, lived in the same winter village, and whose boundary included all of the seasonal camps its members normally utilized. Fienup-Riordan (1984:64-70) applied a similar definition to what she called "village groups" but her definition is problematic in two ways: (1) it is not specific enough to avoid a basic problem of

[23] But also, since the studies were being written up simultaneously, the authors presumably did not have an opportunity to compare and discuss their respective findings.

semantics, in that virtually any place of residence could be called a 'village'; and (2) it also fails to recognize that a 'village group' could be composed of a single extended family. But the term 'local group' also is not free of potential problems, as major seasonal camps were not necessarily occupied by people from just one winter village.

Regional group/society: an assemblage of two or more local groups, the members of which considered themselves—or were considered by others—to be part of a recognizable, larger social unit (cf. Fienup-Riordan 1984:65; Shinkwin and Pete 1984:99-101; Wolfe 1979:26). In the anthropological literature on the Yup'ik these terms have been used interchangeably, as well as inconsistently. In some cases they seem to correspond with the definitions of "society" presented by Levy (1966:20-21 [and elaborated upon by Burch (1994:448-451)]) and "nation" by Burch (1998:8; 2006:5-9); but in others they are a closer match to the "regional groups" described by Burch and Correll (1972) for North Alaska.

As explained later in this study, however, data limitations and/or incomplete analyses of certain data sources presently hinder the delineation of local groups among all Central Yup'ik populations except the *Nuniwarmiut*.

## Assessments of Territoriality

Historically, the Central Yup'ik were "socially divided into a number of overlapping extended family networks which in turn were united residentially into a number of

territorially centered (as opposed to discretely bounded) village groups..." (Fienup-Riordan 1984:64; cf. Pratt 1984a:51-54, 57). The assertion that Yup'ik groups were not 'discretely bounded' is centrally important to evaluations of territoriality among these people, as fixed boundaries are commonly regarded as the surest markers of territories between adjacent human populations. That being said, the only Yup'ik groups previously analyzed in terms of territoriality are the *Kuigpagmiut* (Wolfe 1981) and the *Akulmiut* (Andrews 1989, 1994). The reported results were significantly different, and also were not evaluated in the context of the Central Yup'ik as a whole.

**The Kuigpagmiut Case**

Wolfe opened his discussion of *Kuigpagmiut* land use patterns with the following observation:

> At first glance, clustered activities might be interpreted as representing the "territory" of a village or a family, or perhaps the land "owned" as "property" by a village or family. This would be a mistaken interpretation. Both territorial and property concepts were inappropriate for understanding geographic regularities in resource use. Most [*Kuigpagmiut*] themselves were insistent about this (Wolfe 1981:240).

Accordingly, Wolfe concluded the *Kuigpagmiut* were non-territorial, *except* in certain contexts where they interfaced with Western legal institutions (1981:240-241; cf. Nadasdy 2002). He instead described five general principles by which the *Kuigpagmiut* regulated land use patterns: participatory use, geographic affiliation, deference to first-users, kinship affiliation, and optimization (Wolfe 1981:241-252). After noting that these were not codified rules, Wolfe provided detailed explanations for each principle: these are paraphrased below.

- *The Principle of Participatory Use.* This involves two main ideas. First, areas and their resources can be "used" by individuals or groups, but not owned. Stated another way, there are rightful occupants and users of a region of land and water, but no rightful owners. This idea approximates the concept of "usufruct." Second, individual occupants of an area rarely hunted or fished there alone; instead, they participated with others in such activities ('others' included humans, non-human species, and even intangible sentient beings and forces). An individual was expected to be mindful of and respectful toward the others with whom he participated in daily pursuits (Wolfe 1981:242).
- *The Principle of Geographic Affiliation.* Individuals had rights of access to any area or region with which they could demonstrate a permanent or enduring social identity. The geographic naming conventions of Yup'ik social groupings embodied this principle (e.g., a member of the *Kuigpagmiut* was identified with, and therefore had rights to access, every area within the

territorial limits of that group). A person acquired geographic affiliations at birth: i.e., by being born at a particular place and by dwelling there one became identified with it. Birth also granted a person social identity with the geographic region within which his kinship group resided (Wolfe 1981:242-244).

- *The Principle of Deference to First Users.* A person (or group of persons) who could demonstrate prior use of an area, or was perceived as having arrived at the area first, was considered by others to have priority rights over its resources. In the first instance, the site or area in question could be considered occupied even without tangible evidence of an occupant. "First use" rights also extended to resources such as driftwood logs, where the person who found the logs could mark them in some way (recognized by others as a legitimate claim) and return to harvest them at a later date (Wolfe 1981:245-248).
- *The Principle of Kinship Affiliation.* Kinship ties could be used to gain permission to access resource areas customarily used by distant relatives. The distant relative often assisted with the harvesting activity and/or allowed his home to be used as a base of operations (Wolfe 1981:249-250).
- *The Principle of Optimization.* All other things being equal, a person with the option of hunting in two areas usually chose the one closest to his home (i.e., the least expensive option). This principle reflected an interest in maximizing efficiency and minimizing costs.

These principles, in evident use among the people in 1980-1981, were interpreted by Wolfe (1981:251-252) as the means by which the *Kuigpagmiut* regulated land and resource use without having to rely on concepts such as "ownership" and "property."

**The Akulmiut Case**

In contrast to the previous case, Andrews' approach to the study of *Akulmiut* territoriality followed an entirely different trajectory. At the outset, she embraced the idea that "The distinguishing characteristic of territory, and hence territoriality, is defense" (Andrews 1989:33), and defined territoriality as "the exclusive use of resources or occupation of an area by means of overt defense or some form of communication or advertisement" (Andrews 1994:82). Establishing the existence of territoriality using these criteria requires evidence that the *Akulmiut* practiced some clear form of boundary defense: however, Andrews does not satisfy that requirement. As indicated below, to support her claim for territoriality among the *Akulmiut* at least three points are made that I contend are suspect, mainly by virtue of Andrews' failure to evaluate her data from a broader, regional perspective.

- "*Examples of overt defense by Akulmiut were evident in "war stories" and certain place-names that referred to encounters with "the enemy," certain non-Akulmiut groups*" (Andrews 1989:430). Problem: The stories in question are vague accounts that are common in the regional oral tradition and typically

unverifiable; and the presumably hostility-laden place names referred to often do not have "an associated account" (Andrews 1989:431) that explains their genesis. Thus, even if the stories and place names with which Andrews is concerned are based on actual 'warfare' that occurred sometime in the past, there is no way to establish the causes of the reported hostilities. Accordingly, it is not reasonable to cite them as evidence of overt defense of a territory.

- "*The boundaries of the Akulmiut also were indicated by place names. Place names tend to end at boundaries. The area used and occupied by the Akulmiut was delineated by Yup'ik place names (Andrews 1989), the distribution of which corroborated historic accounts that associated the area between the Yukon and Kuskokwim Rivers with the Akulmiut*" (Andrews 1994:81; cf. Correll 1976). Problem: These remarks are fine, in and of themselves, but not in the full context of her argument for *Akulmiut* territoriality. That is, implicit in Andrews' argument is the assumption that neighboring groups did not know (or share) the "*Akulmiut*" place names, and did not have their own names for any of those same places.[24] However, Andrews does not compare the findings of her place name work among the *Akulmiut* with place name collections derived from work conducted among neighboring Yup'ik groups (e.g., those of the lower Kuskokwim River and Nelson Island areas)—the most extensive of which were compiled in the

[24] A similar assumption about Yup'ik place names in the Unalakleet River drainage (i.e., Correll 1972:150) has recently been proven false, demonstrating that a major revision to previously accepted ethnic group territorial boundaries in that area is necessary (Pratt 2005).

course of ANCSA 14(h)(1) site investigations (see Pratt 2009a).[25] Thus, no evidence is provided to support the implication that *Akulmiut* place names were exclusive to that group (cf. Ray 1971:1-2), which raises questions about the accuracy of the perimeter boundaries she delineated on the basis of those names.

- "*Kinship also served to reinforce territorial boundaries. Boundaries were defined by a marriage universe*" (Andrews 1994:85). Problem: The finding that about 67% of one *Akulmiut* village and just over 50% of the other two villages were endogamous in the 1920s (Andrews 1989:108-110)—for an overall rate of endogamy of about 59%—begs the question of what rights in land and resource uses, if any, were extended to the families of the spouses that married in? That is, if such rights *were* extended (to outside relatives of some 41% of the *Akulmiut* population) how could it *not* decrease 'territoriality'? Principles of Eskimo kinship make this a logical point of inquiry, and one that has direct relevance to the study of territoriality;[26] however, Andrews does not address the issue.

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[25] Consider also that in 1974 Joshua Phillip provided information about sites and place names in the Akiachak area to ANCSA researchers (Robert Drozda, personal communication [31 October 2007]). In Andrews' scheme this should not have been possible because he was a resident of Tuluksak—which was not an *Akulmiut* village.

[26] This applies as well to North American Indian populations in general, as suggested in the following quote: "The connection between intertribal kinship ties and access to resources is clear. Individuals who married or were adopted into another tribe had access to their families' villages and hunting grounds" (Albers and Kay 1987:65).

A more general point of contention I have with Andrews' argument for territoriality among the *Akulmiut* is its fundamental basis on a dense and predictable resource base. I do not deny the existence of such a resource base in the home area of the *Akulmiut*; my problem is that Andrews fails to note that all of the *Akulmiut's* neighbors enjoyed equally dense and predictable resource bases. Intentionally or not, her omission of this fact suggests just the opposite: i.e., that the *Akulmiut* lived in a land of plenty that their presumably less fortunate neighbors envied.

But, in fact, resources throughout the geographical region to which the *Akulmiut* belong are "dense and predictable"—so does this mean all groups in the region are territorial in the same way Andrews describes for the *Akulmiut*? Andrews does not address this question. Also, can one argue that the groups were *not* territorial as a result of their respective dense and predictable resource bases (cf. Cashdan 1983:48)? That is, if all groups occupied resource rich areas it seems any recognized physical boundaries between groups would be quite lax or flexible, simply because most areas were comparable. In such scenarios, why would any group need to defend land against encroachment (cf. Fitzhugh 2003:241; Kelly 1995:192)? Andrews also does not demonstrate that resources "critical" to the *Akulmiut* were either especially desired by or unavailable to neighboring groups. Her disregard for this point is particularly interesting given that the most important resources in the *Akulmiut* area (i.e., blackfish, whitefish and pike) arguably were not nearly as abundant in the areas of neighboring groups.

Since the *Akulmiut* were surrounded by other Yup'ik groups, to assess the 'territoriality' of that specific population with such a myopic focus is especially problematic. Although the *Akulmiut*, per se, had received little attention from anthropologists prior to Andrews' work that is not the case for other groups in the region; and, as discussed above, at least one other anthropologist (Wolfe 1981) had previously considered the question of territoriality among one of the *Akulmiut's* neighboring groups—the *Kuigpagmiut*—in some depth. Andrews was certainly aware of this work [it is cited in both her 1989 and 1994 studies], so it is particularly odd that she neither detailed nor explicitly challenged Wolfe's findings, especially given their apparent incongruity with her data on the *Akulmiut*. Though it is speculation, Andrews may have justified evaluating her data in isolation from those concerning the *Kuigpagmiut* on the grounds that she was testing a specific hypothesis about hunter-gatherer territoriality (i.e., that of Dyson-Hudson and Smith 1978), as opposed to whether or not Yup'ik Eskimos were territorial. But whatever the explanation, the lack of attention given to Wolfe's prior work on the *Kuigpagmiut* is a serious weakness in Andrews' study of the *Akulmiut*.

Additionally, Andrews' territoriality argument appears inconsistent with recorded oral accounts of *Akulmiut* elders...which imply non-territorial land use practices. The following example is from a 1988 interview with a 79 year old elder of Nunapitchuk:

> We, the Yup'ik people usually share the land. We don't claim certain areas to be ours (Neck 1988).

Very similar testimony has been recorded with elders throughout the Central Yup'ik region (e.g., Alakayak 1989; Phillip 1988; Polty et al. 1982b; Smith 1981; cf. Fienup-Riordan 1990:222-224); thus, Andrews' portrayal of the *Akulmiut* sets that group up as highly divergent from other Yup'ik populations relative to the question of territoriality.

In sum, Andrews produced an excellent history of the *Akulmiut* (which includes particularly valuable information about customary land use and subsistence patterns among that group), but her study's overall value relative to the topic of Yup'ik territoriality is marginal. Ultimately, territoriality for this group was not proven under the specific, definitive criteria Andrews employed.

The marked discordance between the findings of Wolfe and Andrews makes the question of territoriality among the Central Yup'ik all the more interesting and worthy of investigation, as does the extensive oral history on warfare in the region. But existing anthropological discussions of Yup'ik warfare (e.g., Fienup-Riordan 1990:144-166) have not specifically addressed that subject relative to territoriality.

## Data Constraints

Important segments of the Central Yup'ik region remain poorly represented in the literature; examples include most areas inland from the coast and major rivers, and the country extending from about Quinhagak to Kulukak Bay. Comparatively few written historical accounts exist on the Yup'ik, and documentation on much of the region dates to sometime after 1920. As a result of these limitations, discussions of many aspects of historic Yup'ik life are dependent on Native oral accounts—and this sometimes increases interpretation challenges. For instance, since warfare in the region ceased prior to Russian contact virtually all discussions of internecine hostilities are based on oral history, and only those recorded before about 1880 *might have been* informed by personal experience.

Without question, the most voluminous and geographically comprehensive data set in existence concerning Yup'ik land use, settlement patterns and social relations is that compiled during implementation of Section 14(h)(1) of ANCSA (see Pratt 2009a). It contains written reports on about 1,000 different cultural sites (e.g., villages, camps, cemeteries) in the region, over 1,250 tape recorded oral history interviews, notes on several hundred unrecorded interviews, and a wide assortment of associated records (O'Leary et al. 2009; Pratt 1992, 2004). Although the collection is most informative about Yup'ik history and culture during the period from about 1920 to 1970, it can reliably be used to reach back in time to at least 1900. Due to insufficient processing of (and limited electronic access to) the material, however, this rich body of data has

been largely untapped by researchers other than those with direct work experience on the ANCSA 14(h)(1) Program. Most oral history recordings contain extensive Native language dialogue and are topically broad in scope, but they have not been fully translated and transcribed so the information they contain is difficult to access. The site reports are also loaded with information about land use history, compiled from a combination of written and ethnographic sources. But the absence of a subject index for the reports means that searching them for specific types of information requires time-consuming, archival research. Frustrating as they may be, such obstacles can be overcome by committed researchers who schedule adequate time to perform the necessary trench-work with this collection. But time is not always easily found.

Thus, geographical and/or temporal gaps in the regional database make it difficult to produce a balanced account about almost any feature of 19$^{th}$ century life among the Central Yup'ik as a whole. As indicated in the following chapters, more voluminous and comprehensive data exists on the *Nuniwarmiut* than on any other Yup'ik group. This study uses those data to reconstruct *Nuniwarmiut* land use and socio-territorial organization for the period prior to intense contact.

# CHAPTER 4: THE NUNIWARMIUT

The indigenous inhabitants of Nunivak Island are commonly referred to as the Nunivak Eskimos (e.g., Lantis 1984), but refer to themselves as *Nuniwarmiut* (e.g., Lantis 1946:156) or Cup'it (Amos and Amos 2003:97). The latter term is a plural form of Cup'ig, which also designates the language spoken on Nunivak—considered by linguists as the most divergent of all Central Yup'ik dialects.[27] The *Nuniwarmiut* stand out from other Central Yup'ik populations in a number of ways, most of which are related to their occupation of an isolated, insular environment. For instance, in addition to insulating them from European contact, the physical setting and landscape of Nunivak provided the *Nuniwarmiut* with an abundance of several food and material resources (e.g., caribou, migratory seabirds, stone) that were either not widely available to or more difficult to obtain by other Yup'ik groups. The rockier, higher and better drained nature of the island's terrain also offered greater protection from devastating seasonal floods and the insidious erosion that regularly threatened Yup'ik communities situated along the mainland coast or the banks of major rivers. In fact, settlements on

[27] I avoid use of the term "Cup'it" as a group designation for the Nunivak people because it could be misinterpreted as including or applying to certain speakers of the Hooper Bay-Chevak dialect of Central Yup'ik. That is, the people of Chevak refer to this dialect as Cup'ik, a plural form of which is Cupiit. They collectively refer to themselves as Cupiit. Despite the similarity of their terms of identification, however, the Nunivak and "Chevak" dialects are very different (cf. Jacobson 2003:viii [note 4]; Polty et al. 1982a:24; Woodbury 2001). Interestingly, although they are considered by linguists to speak virtually the same dialect as that spoken in Chevak, the people of Hooper Bay call their language Yup'ik and regard themselves as Yupiit. A recent reference to "the Cupig dialects of Hooper Bay, Chevak and Nunivak" (Fienup-Riordan 2005:xxiii) indicates inattention to such distinctions is a continuing problem.

Nunivak were rarely abandoned due to environmental conditions or processes of these types so, other things being equal, the island's physical attributes probably led to comparatively greater stability in site occupations among the *Nuniwarmiut* (cf. Lantis 1984:209). There is little doubt that those same attributes also allowed for more extensive overland travel by foot on Nunivak than on the adjacent mainland—where the predominantly marshy terrain and myriad lakes, ponds, rivers and sloughs hindered such travel except in the winter months.

**Physical Environment**

Nunivak Island measures roughly 96 km east-west and 64 km north-south, and lies about 40 km west across Etolin Strait from Nelson Island and the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta coast (Figures 1 and 2).[28] Its volcanic origin accounts for the rugged and rocky coastline, which includes sheer cliffs up to 140 m high, in addition to extensive estuaries and lagoons, broad sandy beaches, and dune formations up to 40 m high; and an interior containing hundreds of lakes and ponds, and numerous hills, cinder cones and butte/mesa-like landforms with elevations rising to more than 500 m above sea level (Pratt 2001:28-29). Over 70 watercourses flow from the island's interior to peripheral lowlands, but few are navigable very far above their lower reaches.

[28] Nelson Island is separated from the coastal mainland on its northern end by Ninglick River and on its southeastern end by Kolavinarak River, neither of which impedes movement between the island and the mainland (cf. Lantis 1960:190). As such, in terms of geographic isolation it is an island of entirely different character than Nunivak. From the *Nuniwarmiut* perspective, Nelson Island is the mainland.

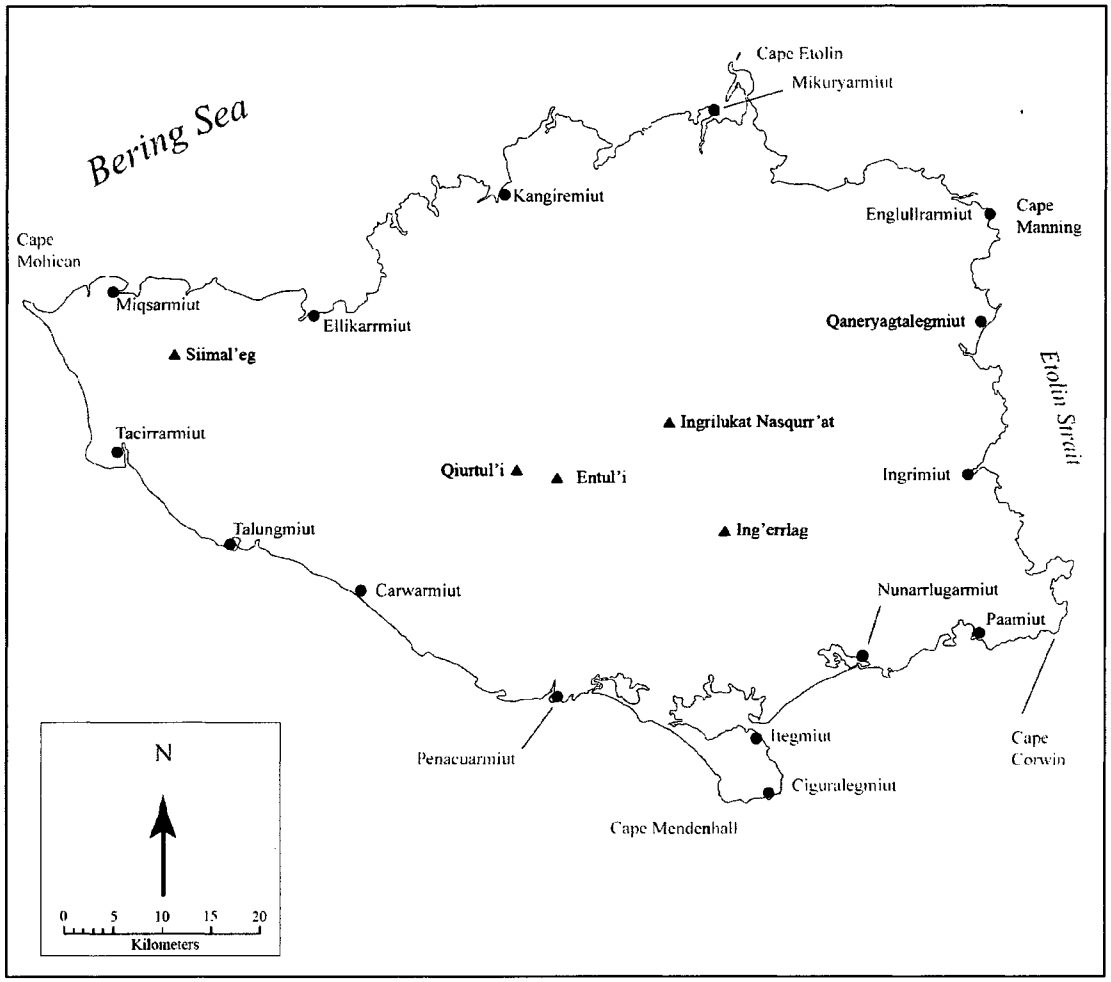


Figure 2: Nunivak Island, Selected Settlements and Interior Landforms.

Latitude and the surrounding sea influence a subarctic maritime climate which typically includes foggy, rainy summers and winters characterized by repeated heavy storms with strong winds that sweep across Nunivak (VanStone 1989:1). Rocky near-shore islets and submerged shoals ring much of the island perimeter; the seabed beyond forms an outward sloping plain where depths soon reach 15 m. Near-shore currents are chiefly tidal but ocean currents of up to two knots flow by the island in a northerly direction, fluctuating depending on ice conditions in the Bering Sea. Sea ice normally

begins to form by mid-October and reaches its greatest extent in February or March: in some years pack ice completely envelops Nunivak. But currents are so strong in Etolin Strait that its middle portion typically consists of unstable pan-ice. The northward retreat of the ice pack usually frees the shores before May, although ice generally remains longer in the bays, estuaries and lagoons (US BIA ANCSA 1995(1):5-6).

The diverse flora on Nunivak is broadly comparable to that of the adjacent mainland. Of 257 plant species identified for the region, at least 179 are shared between the two; many of the remaining varieties do not reach Nunivak, while others occur on the island alone or are shared with western Siberia (Selkregg 1976). Up to 90 percent of the vegetation cover is composed of moist-tundra species, characterized by a wide variety of low-growing shrubs, berries, herbs and grasses rooted in mosses and lichens. Wet-tundra species, which include relatively more sedges, are scattered along the island's lowlands; and alpine tundra, dominated by lichens, occurs at the highest elevations in the central interior alongside volcanic debris and weathered lava flows. Substantial dwarf willow and alder brush line some stream channels, but the island is entirely treeless. Disturbance vegetation (especially bluejoint grass and fireweed) typically grows on archeological sites where the tundra mat has been disturbed; however, it can also be found along slumped stream banks and in association with animal burrows and bird nesting localities. Beach grass covers the dunes and strands along the south coast, and eelgrass beds choke the protected estuaries and lagoons along the same shores (US

BIA ANCSA 1995(1):6-7). Historically, the *Nuniwarmiut* utilized plants within all of these vegetation communities (see Griffin 1999, 2001b).

Nunivak is also home to a wide variety of indigenous avifauna, mammals and fish. The western escarpments provide nesting and roosting habitat for several species of cliff-dwelling sea birds, including murres, puffins, auklets, cormorants and kittiwakes (see Hoffman 1990; Pratt 1990). Geese and several varieties of duck nest on the island during the summer, while harlequin and eider ducks are present virtually year-round. The island also harbors swans, cranes, ptarmigan and an assortment of shorebirds, passerines and raptors (US BIA ANCSA 1995(1):7).

Wolves and caribou once roamed the landscape as well; but caribou were apparently hunted to extinction prior to about 1890 (Petroff 1892; Pratt 2001; US Census Office 1893:113) and the last wolf was reportedly killed around 1952 (Kolerok and Kolerok 1991a; Lantis 1960:166). Polar bears have apparently, but only rarely, reached Nunivak during years of particularly severe sea ice. Otherwise, the largest indigenous animals include red and arctic fox, mink and weasel, and rodents such as lemming, voles and shrews.

The largest land mammals on the island today are reindeer and musk-oxen, both introduced in the early twentieth century (e.g., Pratt 1994:340-342) and by now well established residents. Under the auspices of the Loman Company, reindeer arrived

from the Nome area in 1920, were later cross-bred with caribou (cf. Rearden 1998:83-91) and now form the heart of a thriving local herding industry. Musk-oxen were transplanted to the island from Greenland in 1935, and had increased so dramatically by the late 1960s that additional transplants were possible from Nunivak to other Alaskan localities. In the absence of predators, however, the vitality these animals have enjoyed has not been without impact—problems with overgrazing being one example (USFWS 1975:50-57).

Diverse, seasonally abundant plants and animals formed the base for thriving aboriginal economies (Griffin 1999, 2004; Nowak 1988; Pratt 1990). Each summer, five species of anadromous salmon return to Nunivak's freshwater streams, which also support resident populations of Dolly Varden trout, arctic char and grayling. Inland ponds and upper stream drainages contain stickleback and blackfish. The intertidal zones, estuaries and near-shore waters are equally rich, including flounder and saffron cod—the latter being an especially important winter staple (Drozda 2009: Appendix C). At least 50 species of clam, cockle and mussle are available from the coastal beaches. Halibut, flounder, herring, cod and sculpin are taken offshore in season. Marine fauna in the vicinity include sea lions, walrus, and four species of seal, with harbor seals being a mainstay of the economy (Lantis 1984:209). Some twelve varieties of whale are also seasonally present in the area, though many are only infrequent visitors (US BIA ANCSA 1995(1):7-8). With the exception of belugas (e.g., Griffin 2004:144-145; Lantis 1960:16; 1984:209), whales apparently were not purposefully hunted by the

*Nuniwarmiut*; however, they were utilized opportunistically when they happened to wash up on the island (Pratt and Shaw 1992).

Nunivak's indigenous inhabitants flourished in this environment. They favored stream mouths around the coastal fringe for village sites, so traces of associated cemeteries, dwellings and refuse piles are found almost everywhere. Along with isolated cemeteries, the remains of ancient caribou hunting camps are scattered throughout the island's interior (Pratt 2001); some of them were more recently used in association with reindeer herding activities. An extensive trail system that extended around the island's perimeter and crisscrossed its interior (see Pratt 2001:29-30 [Figure 2]) linked historically occupied coastal settlements with interior camp sites. Finally, the *Nuniwarmiut's* intensive use of their environment is also expressed by the fact that, for centuries at least, the island's topography was named in detail (Drozda 1994).

## Prehistory

It is generally assumed that human occupation of Nunivak Island began within the last 2,500 years; that is, during the Norton tradition (e.g., Dumond 1987:125-127; Griffin 1999:76-93; 2004:37-44; Nowak 1982:75; 1986:165; Oswalt 1967:250; cf. Shaw 1982:61; 1998). In terms of the Central Yup'ik region as a whole, Nunivak has received comparatively extensive attention from archeologists (e.g., Griffin 1999, 2002, 2004; Nowak 1982, 1986; US BIA ANCSA 1995; cf. Pratt 2001:43-45; Pratt and Shaw 1992); however, this is largely a case of "something is better than nothing."

Far too little archeological work has actually been done on the island to support many definitive statements about its prehistory, but we do know that Nunivak has been continuously occupied for over 2,000 years. From an archeological perspective, the best known areas of the island are on its north coast, where significant excavations have been undertaken along the Mekoryuk River (e.g., Nowak 1982, 1986) and at Nash Harbor (Griffin 1999, 2004). Limited testing of sites in other areas has also occurred (e.g., US BIA ANCSA 1995; VanStone 1954, 1957).

Although based on data that were unavoidably limited in quantity and geographic coverage across the island, Nowak (1982, 1986) developed a chronological framework for Nunivak that was largely consistent with the broader cultural traditions defined by Dumond (e.g., 1972, 1987; cf. Dumond et al. 1975) for western Alaska. But more recent investigations on Nunivak by the BIA (US BIA ANCSA 1995) and Griffin (1999, 2004) yielded archeological, ethnohistorical and ethnographic data relevant to testing and/or modifying Nowak's proposed chronology.[29] For instance, both of these projects generated numerous radiometric dates (Griffin 1999; 2004:68-69, 195-199; US BIA ANCSA 1995(1):87-89; cf. O'Leary 2007:135-140) and incorporated oral history accounts into archeological interpretations whenever relevant. Also, the BIA work involved sites scattered throughout the island's coastal margin *and in its interior*—an area formerly assumed to be devoid of archeological sites (Curtis 1930:5; Nowak 1982:87; VanStone 1989:40).

[29] See Griffin (2004:35-61) for a detailed consideration of this matter.

The BIA investigations produced evidence that Norton occupations of Nunivak were considerably more widespread than previously thought, and circumstantial evidence strongly suggests they (and later "Thule" occupations of the island) included an inland orientation associated with caribou hunting (Pratt 2001:44-45; cf. Dumond 2000:5).[30] This is significant for at least three reasons (Pratt 2001:44-45; US BIA ANCSA 1995(1):31): (1) Nowak's chronology does not consider the possibility of prehistoric sites in Nunivak's interior; (2) on the American coast of the Bering Sea, "insular areas such as Nunivak" are said to have been initially occupied by Norton peoples (moving southward from the Bering Strait area) who strongly emphasized the harvesting of littoral resources (Dumond 1987:126-127; cf. Nowak 1982:87 [nos. 1 and 2]); and (3) on the Yukon-Kuskokwim mainland the Norton tradition has been almost exclusively correlated with coastal adaptations (e.g., Okada et al. 1982:26; Shaw 1983:358-359; cf. Fienup-Riordan 1988:472 [note 91]; Griffin 2004:42-44). Further, the so-called "Thule" populations that succeeded Norton peoples are believed to have been even more focused on littoral resources—but caribou were present throughout the 'Thule' occupation of Nunivak, and potentially in high numbers. Given the quantity of interior sites (some of which are immense) and solid evidence that a resident, non-migratory caribou herd was present on the island in both Norton and 'Thule' times, there is good

[30] In the author's opinion, systematic testing of selected coastal and interior sites has high potential to yield evidence of pre-Norton (e.g., Arctic Small Tool tradition) occupations on Nunivak (cf. Griffin 2004:39; Nowak 1982:87 [#5]; Pratt 2001:45).

cause to believe that prehistoric human residents of Nunivak spent substantially more time engaged in "inland" activities than existing archeological models suggest.

As a final note, it may be instructive for traditionally-schooled archeologists (particularly those interested in the Yukon-Kuskokwim region) to consider that the most tantalizing and potentially important data related to the prehistory of Nunivak Island has resulted not from site excavations, but instead from a combination of reconnaissance-level surveys, ethnohistorical and oral history research (e.g., Griffin 2004).

## Contact History[31]

The contact history of Nunivak Island began with Russian coastal explorations in southwestern Alaska sponsored by either the Imperial Navy or the Russian-American Company during the early 1800s. The main objectives of these explorations were economic and political: the former associated with the Alaska [Russian America] fur trade, and the latter with Russia's desire to extend its influence in this territory given similar interests by other nations.

Nunivak Island's existence first became known to Russia during an 1818-1819 expedition directed by Petr Korsakovskiy. En route from Bristol Bay to the

[31] This section draws heavily from material the author produced as part of an unpublished government report (i.e., US BIA ANCSA 1995(1):9-18; cf. Griffin 2001a; 2004:75-76; VanStone 1989:1-7).

Kuskokwim River area, the Korsakovskiy expedition anchored in Goodnews Bay and was told of Nunivak Island by local Eskimo inhabitants (VanStone 1973:7-8). The expedition turned back short of the Kuskokwim River, however, and did not attempt to reach Nunivak.

The Russian discovery of Nunivak Island occurred in July 1821 when it was sighted and visited by Captain Mikhail S. Vasilev of the ship **Otkrytie** ("Discovery"). Vasilev went ashore and made contact with the Eskimo inhabitants, presumably somewhere along the northwest coast. He apparently made no effort to survey the island, but did learn that its people had not previously been in direct contact with Europeans (VanStone 1973:15, 61). Despite having been told the island was called Nunivak, Vasilev named it **Otkrytie** prior to returning to his ship and setting sail for Norton Sound.

Vasilev's discovery of Nunivak came just a few weeks before a second Russian expedition sighted the island. This expedition consisted of two ships: the **Golovnin**, commanded by Vasilii S. Khromchenko, and the **Baranov**, under the command of Adolph K. Etolin. The **Baranov** anchored off the south shore of the island in late July (probably in the vicinity of Cape Mendenhall [cf. Griffin 2004:77]), and Eskimos who came aboard the ship verified to Etolin that he was at Nunivak (VanStone 1973:16). Contrary winds prevented Etolin from circumnavigating the island, but he described some of its coastline, determined its extent from east to west and sighted the strait

[Etolin Strait] which separates Nunivak from the mainland (VanStone 1973:16). Khromchenko and the **Golovnin** sighted Nunivak a few days after Etolin, but fog prevented a closer inspection of the island.

After leaving Nunivak, both Etolin and Khromchenko sailed to the Norton Sound region. Etolin later returned to Nunivak and eventually anchored off the western tip of the island [Cape Mohican], where he again made contact with local inhabitants.[32] In the summer of 1821, therefore, the Nunivak people were visited by Russian expeditions on three separate occasions: once by Vasilev and twice by Etolin. On each occasion non-hostile relations ensued between the Russians and the Nunivak people.

In June 1822, Khromchenko and Etolin sailed together on the **Golovnin** and returned to Nunivak; four days were spent exploring the south and southeast coasts of the island. Khromchenko's 1822 journal (i.e., VanStone 1973) is the only published account describing any of the Russian expeditions to Nunivak Island, and it contains scant information about the indigenous population. It reports that upon arriving at the "cape that projects farthest south" [Cape Mendenhall] the ship was approached by "about 25 baydarkas ... of the one-hatch type, some containing one, some two islanders"

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[32] VanStone (1973:16-19) indicates that Etolin's first visit to Nunivak was on 28-29 July, and his ship arrived at Stuart Island (in Norton Sound) on 6 August; in another passage, however, Etolin is said to have returned to Nunivak on 1 August and remained off its coast until weather conditions permitted him to send a crew ashore on 12 August. Though the dates are apparently confused, there is no question that Etolin did make a return visit to Nunivak (US BIA ANCSA 1995(1):10 [note 1]).

(VanStone 1973:58). An elderly Eskimo man identified as "chief Ayagakak" came aboard the ship wearing a silver medal given to him by Etolin in the previous year and the two groups began trading shortly thereafter. The Nunivakers traded "white fox, red fox, caribou, and muskrat skins for hoop iron, Aleut hatchets, sky-blue bangles, and trade beads" (VanStone 1973:60).

The **Golovnin** set sail toward the east-northeast at the conclusion of the trading and anchored later that same day near "the settlement of Chungalik which lies on the eastern side of the southern end of the island" (VanStone 1973:60).[33] A resident of the settlement named "Tammlokh" boarded the ship while others held back. This man was wearing a Russian-inscribed bronze medal which Khromchenko learned he had received "from a large ship" [i.e., the **Otkrytie**] while hunting on the western end of the island the previous year (VanStone 1973:61). Other residents of the settlement approached the ship after observing the treatment "Tammlokh" received from the Russians; trading similar to that which occurred earlier in the day commenced and continued until sunset. The Nunivakers offered "red fox skins, of which they seemed to have very few and those of the lowest quality, and bows and arrows for iron nails, hoop iron, and trade beads" (VanStone 1973:61).

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[33] Based on more specific locational data provided by Khromchenko, the settlement referred to as "Chungalik" was either *Cingigarrlugarmiut* or *Ciguralegmiut*, probably the former (US BIA ANCSA 1995(1):10 [note 2]; cf. Griffin 2004:77).

Khromchenko anchored offshore from "Chungalik" overnight and trading resumed the following morning. On this occasion, the Nunivakers "exchanged bows, arrows, wooden vessels, and various walrus teeth artifacts for hoop iron and some wretched rusty nails" (VanStone 1973:61).

Two notable observations made by Khromchenko based on his visit to this settlement were that Nunivakers already had "European artifacts"—some reportedly obtained through trade with Kuskokwim Natives—and Nunivak "chiefs" apparently did not have formal political authority over other members of the society.

After the morning trading ended the **Golovnin** sailed eastward and rounded the southeast cape of the island [Cape Corwin]. A contingent of Nunivakers in "20 baydarkas" rowed toward the ship as soon as it anchored...several miles offshore from the settlement of "Chinik" [i.e., *Cingigmiut*]. Rather than waiting for them to reach the ship, Khromchenko and Etolin went ashore and commenced trading with the local inhabitants. In the course of this visit Khromchenko explored the settlement and surrounding area. One of his comments about "Chinik" was that the houses he observed there were "exactly like those of the Aglegmiut"[34] (VanStone 1973:62-63).

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[34] The "Aglegmiut" (*Aglurmiut*) were an Eskimo group from the Kuskokwim River area. Several early Russian sources contend that the historic population of Nunivak Island included a displaced population of this group (see Fienup-Riordan 1988:458-459; Wrangell 1970:17; cf. Zagoskin 1967:210-211), but this has not been proven.

On the following day the **Golovnin** sailed northward along Nunivak's east coast and anchored at a river located an unspecified distance north of "Chinik" to fill its empty water barrels. Khromchenko's description of the river's setting and the presence of several islets to the left [south] of the river mouth suggest the watercourse in question was probably *Ingrimiut Kuigat*, which takes its name from the settlement [*Ingrimiut*] situated along both banks near the river's mouth (US BIA ANCSA 1995(1):11; cf. Griffin 2004:77). While the crew filled water barrels, Khromchenko went by baydarka to the left bank of the river and saw one part of this settlement. He came upon a deserted dwelling around which were "fishing implements and caribou antlers" as well as "broken pots and wooden bowls, many fresh [wood] shavings and a fire which had just gone out" (VanStone 1973:64). Before returning to the ship, Khromchenko and his oarsmen boated to one of the nearby islets and collected seagull eggs.[35]

The **Golovnin** departed Nunivak the next day, thus completing the first Euro-American exploration of the island. Information compiled about Nunivak Island during the 1821-1822 Russian explorations discussed above was summarized as follows by Petr Tikhmenev, a Russian historian:

> On Nunivok live up to four hundred inhabitants of both sexes, in sixteen known villages. . . . The natives on Nunivok Island do not do much

[35] If the river Khromchenko's journal refers to was *Ingrimiut Kuigat*, the largest of these islets is *Ayapraalitar* (US BIA ANCSA 1995(1):12 [note 4]).

> hunting and trapping of fur-bearing animals although there are many foxes on this island. Their main occupation is hunting large hair seals, or makliaki [*maklak*, bearded seals], walrus, and caribou, and catching fish offshore. These islanders lead a sedentary life, coming to the mainland in the summer to barter sealskin blubber, and a few foxes for tobacco from the local natives. They know very little about cloth and do not use it for clothing (Tikhmenev 1978:437).

Later Russian activities in southwest Alaska and the Yukon-Kuskokwim region, per se, led to occasional trade contacts with the *Nuniwarmiut*, but evidently none of them took place on Nunivak. Furthermore, the island was not visited by either Lavrentiy Zagoskin (1967) or Iakov Netsvetov (1984)—the two main Russian sources of information about Central Yup'ik Eskimo life and culture prior to 1900.[36]

Over 50 years elapsed between the Khromchenko-Etolin expedition and the next recorded Euro-American visit to Nunivak, that being in the summer of 1874 when William H. Dall conducted a geological survey of the island's northeastern section. Dall (1870, 1877a, 1877b) provides very little information about the island or its native inhabitants. He contended Nunivak was populated by at least three different social

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[36] Edward Nelson (1882, 1887, 1899) also never journeyed to Nunivak Island. As noted by Griffin (2004:80, 203 [note 24]), however, an Alaska Commercial Company trader based at Andreafsky (Charles Peterson) was employed by Nelson to acquire cultural items from the *Nuniwarmiut*, and he made several trips to the island for that purpose.

groups (i.e., the "Magemut", "Kuskwogmut" and "Agulmut"), each of which had its main contingent on the mainland (Dall 1870:406; 1877a:18-19). This claim is highly suspect (Pratt 1984a:96-98). Finally, Dall (1877b) also collected a number of artifacts during his stay on Nunivak, presumably from people in the Cape Etolin area (cf. Griffin 2001a:84-85).

The 23 May 1879 wreck of the American trading brig **Timandra** left its entire eight-man crew stranded on Nunivak until 7 August 1879, when the US Revenue-Steamer **Rush** arrived to collect the men (Bailey 1880; Tornfelt and Burwell 1992:99). The brig's cargo reportedly "consisted of cutlery, hardware, clothing, tobacco, and other articles of trade, powder, shot, lead, a few guns, and muzzle-loading rifles, besides a quantity of breech-loading arms and ammunition, and one hundred barrels of rum . . ." (Bailey 1880). The brig was destroyed in the wreck but most its cargo was salvaged. The breech-loading arms and ammunition were seized as contraband by the Captain of the **Rush**, which ultimately departed Nunivak with only six of the **Timandra**'s crew: the remaining two men voluntarily stayed behind to care for the cargo until another ship could recover it the following year (Bailey 1880). *Nuniwarmiut* oral tradition suggests the **Timandra**'s crew was based at or near the settlement of *Tacirrarmiut* while on Nunivak: i.e., two shipwrecked whitemen are said to have once had a "store" at *Tacirrarmiut* and reportedly murdered three *Nuniwarmiut* before finally leaving the island (Kolerok and Kolerok 1991b:6-8; Lantis 1960:12-13, 19-20; VanStone 1989:5).

On 11 June 1880, the US Revenue-Steamer **Corwin**, en route to Cape Romanzof, was forced by sea-ice conditions to drop anchor along the northern coast of Nunivak. The ship's Captain, C.L. Hooper, described the **Corwin's** anchorage as "a good harbor for a southerly wind, about twenty miles from the west end [of the island], off a native settlement, the inhabitants of which ran away to the hills on our approach" (Hooper 1881:5). On the following day, Hooper's men "succeeded in capturing" the settlement's seven residents, who "were very much alarmed, and evidently thought they were to be killed" (Hooper 1881:5). They consisted of one man, three women and three children. Hooper's limited comments emphasized the peoples' evident lack of contact with Euro-Americans and included the following description of the settlement itself:

> The houses of this settlement, ten in number, were built of mud, and all connected by a subterranean passage. They were arranged in a circle, with a common entrance to the covered way in the centre. From the main passage short ones branched off to each house. These afford the only means of entering the houses (Hooper 1881:5).[37]

The **Corwin** remained at anchor through the night and left Nunivak the next morning, 13 June 1880.

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[37] Based on this description and the findings of BIA site surveys on Nunivak, there is no doubt the settlement the **Corwin** visited on this occasion was *Kangiremiut* (US BIA ANCSA 1995(1):13 [note 5]; cf. VanStone 1989:21).

Just more than a decade later, in connection with the 11th US census (1890), the **Corwin** returned to Nunivak Island with census agent Ivan Petroff aboard. The **Corwin** landed Petrov on the southeast shore of Cape Mendenhall on 24 July 1891 and retrieved him just offshore from modern Mekoryuk on 8 August 1891 (Hooper 1891a, 1891b; Petroff 1892; Pratt 1997). When efforts to secure a native guide proved unsuccessful, Petroff obtained a "dilapidated kayak" from a woman in exchange for "a small pair of scissors in a dressing case" and, "depending upon his own muscular powers and upon his untried skill in managing so frail a craft along an unknown coast over a stormy sea, [he] was compelled to proceed upon his enumerating journey" (US Census Office 1893:112). Despite Petroff's (1892) claim to the contrary, there is strong evidence he did not circumnavigate the island (Pratt 1997; cf. Lantis 1984:10; VanStone 1989:3-4). He evidently covered half or more of its coastline, however, from Cape Mendenhall around the east coast to some point along the north coast west of Cape Etolin.[38] According to Vanstone (1989:4), Petroff's enumeration "listed nine villages and a few small settlements with a total population of 559, of which considerably more than half were concentrated along the north coast." A close review of pertinent sections of the 1890 census report (US Census Office 1893:6,111-115), however, indicates Petroff actually enumerated more than 15 settlements on the island with a total population of 745 (Pratt 1990:77 [Table 1]; 1997:21). It was probably the following passage in the census report that led to VanStone's erroneous population figure:

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[38] See Pratt (1997) for a detailed analysis of Petroff's travels on Nunivak Island.

> The settlements between Capes Mendenhall and Corwin number 5, with an aggregate population of 186, occupying probably not more than 20 houses at any one time, though the number of dwellings, both temporary and permanent, they have at their disposal is much larger (US Census Office 1893:113).

The "aggregate population" of these settlements is not represented in the 1890 census table for the Kuskokwim District (US Census Office 1893:6). VanStone either based his Nunivak population figure strictly on the census table or assumed the five settlements enumerated "between Capes Mendenhall and Corwin" were among those Petroff specifically named later in his report. It has since been determined, however, that Petroff did not provide names for any of the settlements located in that particular stretch of Nunivak's coastline (Pratt 1997:22 [Table 1 (no. 20)], 25 [note 15]).[39]

Finally, the 1890 census also briefly discusses trade between Nunivak Island and the mainland (cf. Griffin 2001a; Petroff 1892). The information provided included a listing of items traded and identified the settlement of "Koot, located across the bay from the present village of Mekoryuk, [as] the point of communication with the mainland and

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[39] Only three of nine sites Petroff specifically named have been positively correlated with known Nunivak sites (Pratt 1997:22-23): "Kwigamiut" (*Tacirmiut*), "Ingeramiut" (*Ingrimiut*) and "Koot" (*Pengurpagmiut*).

the commercial center of the island" (VanStone 1989:4; cf. Pratt 1997:22 [Table 1 (no. 10)], 25 [note 11]).

Moravian missionary John H. Kilbuck, who served in the Kuskokwim River region from 1885 through 1900, paid a brief visit to Nunivak Island on 19-20 August 1897.[40] Kilbuck suggested the Nunivakers with whom he had contact were a "different tribe" from the mainland [Kuskokwim] people, and noted they spoke a slightly different dialect (Fienup-Riordan 1988:377-379, 493 [note 257]). He also reported the Nunivakers "live in fear of the Kuskoquim people" and, upon learning his party was from the Kuskokwim region, appeared uncertain of how to treat them (Fienup-Riordan 1988:378). Kilbuck speculated these people were afraid their Kuskokwim neighbors would eventually retaliate for killings the Nunivakers reportedly had committed in the past when Kuskokwim people who had been "carried out to sea" accidentally arrived at the island (Fienup-Riordan 1988:33, 378). Kilbuck's extremely limited contacts with the islanders indicate his claim relative to *Nuniwarmiut* perceptions of the Kuskokwim people should not be taken too seriously. But that said, Kuskokwim area people were reportedly "regarded as strangers and at time enemies" by the *Nuniwarmiut* (Lantis 1984:209).

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[40] This trip was made aboard the Moravian Mission's "sloop **Swan**" (Fienup-Riordan 1988:374). A map sketched by Kilbuck of the "Nunivak Strait and coasts" (Fienup-Riordan 1988:380) suggests the village near which the **Swan** anchored was *Taprarmiut*, along the northeast coast of Nunivak Island (US BIA ANCSA 1995(1):15 [note 8)]).

The US census of 1900 stimulated the next recorded Euro-American contact with the *Nuniwarmiut*. Alanson Weeks, Surgeon aboard the **USS Manning**, was the census agent on this occasion (US Bureau of the Census 1900). Specific villages visited by Weeks were unnamed in his report; he merely identified three broad settlement areas (i.e., Cape Etolin, "Wreck Point" and Nash Harbor), each situated along the island's north coast, and enumerated a total of 110 people. This abbreviated census appears to have been performed over a period of just two days, two months apart (Pratt 1990:77 [Table 1 (a)]).

George B. Gordon, representing the University of Pennsylvania Free Museum of Science and Art, reportedly spent approximately two weeks on Nunivak in the summer of 1905 working on a grammar and vocabulary of the local language (Gordon 1906-1907:72). Griffin (2001a:85-86) contends Gordon never actually reached the island, however, and that his Nunivak data actually derived from repeated visits with a contingent of three *Nuniwarmiut* families who were camped at St. Michael. In any case, about the only information Gordon's journal provided regarding Nunivak is that the islanders and people from the adjacent mainland had extensive intergroup contacts, chiefly in the form of festivals and trade relations (Gordon 1906-1907:75). But this claim is highly inconsistent with other, far more reliable accounts about *Nuniwarmiut* relations with mainland peoples (e.g., Lantis 1946:182-197, 255, 260).

For an unknown period between 1 August and 10 September 1910, L.L. Bales was on Nunivak as an agent of the 13th US census (US Bureau of the Census 1910). Similar to the 12th US census (in 1900), the report produced by Bales also is not a comprehensive census of the island: only parts of the northeastern and northern coasts and the Cape Mendenhall area seem to have been enumerated. Ten settlements were recorded, with a total population of 131 people.[41]

The 14th US Census indicates the enumeration of Nunivak Island took place on 13-14 August 1920 (US Bureau of the Census 1920), and also was not comprehensive. The six settlements recorded were widely scattered and contained a cumulative total of 189 people.[42]

At least six shipwrecks occurred on reefs or shoals adjacent to the island between 1863 and 1909 (Tornfelt and Burwell 1992:99-100; cf. Griffin 2004:82-86). In addition to the wreck of the **Timandra**, discussed above, the 22 May 1889 wreck of the **Ohio 2nd** and the grounding of the bark **Leslie D.** on 23 June 1900 (Tornfelt and Burwell 1992:99-100) may also have generated contact with the local inhabitants. This is

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[41] Four of the settlements Bales enumerated can tentatively be correlated with known sites: i.e., "Chikakaligamute" (*Ciguralegmiut*), "Kongerugamute" (*Kangiremiut*), "Inglogagamute" (*Englullrarmiut*), and "Nokovalugamute" (*Nuuggavluarmiut*) (US BIA ANCSA 1995(1):16 [note 9]).

[42] Four settlements enumerated in 1920 can be confidently correlated with known sites: i.e., "Itigimiut" (*Itegmiut*), "Kaigialigmiut" (*Qayigyalegmiut*), "Nigaramiut Village" (*Negermiut*), and "Kaneriagtaligamiut" (*Qaneryagtalegmiut*). "Tlchagamiut Village" may be either *Tacirrarmiut* or *Ellikarrmiut* (US BIA ANCSA 1995(1):16 [note 10]).

especially likely with regard to the **Leslie D.**, the crew of which was stranded on the island for an unspecified period of time—presumably, somewhere on the eastern coast between Cape Corwin and Cape Manning (cf. Lantis 1960:13). The islanders must also have had periodic contact with crews of various ships cruising past Nunivak en route to other destinations (e.g., Griffin 2004:78-79). Lantis contends that: [before 1920] "villages on the west side of the island had more contact with 'outsiders' because of the whaling fleet passing by that side of Nunivak. From 1920 onward, villages on the north side had closer contact with the 'outside'" (Lantis 1960:23 [#57]).

The visits just summarized constitute the known Euro-American relations with the *Nuniwarmiut* prior to 1920, and there is no evidence these brief contacts brought about notable changes in their way of life (cf. Griffin 2001a:78-79). On the contrary, up to at least 1920 their lifestyle remained remarkably "traditional" (e.g., Hammerich 1953:112-113; Lantis 1946:161; 1984:215), perhaps more so than that of any other Alaska Eskimo group (Collins 1928:155; 1937:257; cf. Curtis 1927:28 [cited in Griffin 2004:87]). But the fabric of local life changed dramatically after 1920, the year in which the US Bureau of Biological Survey and the US Bureau of Education introduced reindeer to Nunivak Island as part of a cooperative agreement with Lomen & Company, a Nome-based trading and reindeer-breeding enterprise (Stern et al. 1980:47). This event ultimately led to designation of the Nunivak Island [wildlife] Reservation by the US Congress in 1928, and precipitated a series of actions originating from outside the island which had significant impacts on local land use and land rights

(see Pratt 1994). The introduction of reindeer, the U.S. Bureau of Education's installment of a White teacher at the village of Nash Harbor (*Ellikarrmiut*) in 1924 and the 1936-1937 establishment of an Evangelical Covenant Church in Mekoryuk (Lantis 1984:210; cf. Sonne 1988:28) led to major changes in *Nuniwarmiut* economic and social life, spirituality, and customary land use and settlement patterns (e.g., Griffin 2001a, 2004:107-132; Lantis 1946, 1960, 1972, 1984; Lee 2000; Pratt 1994). Ironically, the very isolation that long buffered the *Nuniwarmiut* against contact-induced social and cultural change probably worked against them once non-Native enterprises and institutions took root on the island (Griffin 2004:106): i.e., those entities had no competitors and operated with little or no outside scrutiny.

**Historical Context of Anthropological Research on Nunivak Island**

Anthropological work on Nunivak began in 1927, when two separate research projects were undertaken: i.e., Henry Collins and T. Dale Stewart conducted archeological fieldwork and collected anthropometric data from local residents (VanStone 1989:6); and Edward S. Curtis (1930) performed research which led to publication of the first ethnographic description of the *Nuniwarmiut*.

Collins and Stewart (both affiliated with the Smithsonian Institution) arrived at Nash Harbor in June 1927 and stayed on the island until late August; their work was primarily aimed at acquiring skeletal remains and cranial measurements. The most extensive collections of skeletal materials, and associated grave goods, came from

cemeteries around "Tetsiakimuing/Tachiokimuny" (*Tacirrarmiut*) and Nash Harbor (*Ellikarrmiut*); additional collections were made at "Micksakimuny" (*Miqsarmiut*), Cape Etolin and in the vicinity of modern day Mekoryuk. The actual totals are probably higher, but at least 29 complete skeletons and 93 "loose" craniums were collected by Collins and Stewart from *Nuniwarmiut* cemeteries (Collins 1927:16-42).[43]

Data compiled by Curtis (1930) about the *Nuniwarmiut* are considerably more detailed and varied; among the most significant are those that concern caribou hunting (Curtis 1930:32-33; cf. VanStone 1989:10-11). Unpublished photographs by Curtis and diaries describing his stay on the island have recently been discovered and are certain to contain important additional data on the *Nuniwarmiut* (e.g., see Griffin 2004:160-161, 190-193). In 1936-1937, Hans Himmelheber (Fienup-Riordan 2000) collected a variety of ethnographic data on Nunivak and also "made a psychological and ethnographic study of contemporary art and artists" (VanStone 1989:6).

By far the most extensive and diverse ethnographic research concerning these people was conducted by Margaret Lantis, beginning in 1939, when she lived on the island for a full year. The 1946 monograph published on her first period of research on Nunivak (Lantis 1946) is the primary source of ethnographic information about the *Nuniwarmiut*, and also the first ethnographic monograph focused on an Eskimo group in southwest Alaska. Lantis conducted subsequent fieldwork intermittently on the

[43] In October 1996 the Smithsonian Institution returned these remains to Nunivak, where they were reburied in the Mekoryuk cemetery (e.g., Loring 2001:192-197).

island between 1946 and 1956, generating publications on a wide range of anthropological topics (e.g., Lantis 1953, 1959, 1960, 1972), including a detailed volume on *Nuniwarmiut* material culture (VanStone 1989).

James VanStone (1957) conducted a brief archeological survey project on Nunivak in 1952; with more ambitious and protracted archeological work begun in 1967 by Michael Nowak (e.g., 1970, 1982)—who has also studied the local economy, with special focus on diet and contemporary subsistence activities (Nowak 1975, 1977, 1988). Finally, the BIA site surveys previously noted took place in 1986 and 1991. That work resulted in the collection of extensive ethnographic and archeological data concerning subsistence and settlement patterns, among numerous other topics, and inspired several crew members to pursue independent research on the *Nuniwarmiut* thereafter. Those efforts have led to publications on a broad range of subjects including: place names (Drozda 1994); population studies (Pratt 1997); ethnobotany (Griffin 2001b); oral history (Drozda 2007); archeology (Griffin 1999, 2002); petroglyphic art (Pratt and Shaw 1992); culture contact and change (Griffin 2001a; Pratt 1994); and land use and subsistence practices (Drozda 2009; Hoffman 1990; Pratt 1990, 2001).

Even more significant for the *Nuniwarmiut* themselves, the extensive data compiled as a result of the BIA investigations on the island—and especially the many oral history recordings—greatly facilitated development of a Cup'ig dictionary (Amos and

Amos 2003), and are being actively integrated into educational curricula at the local school. These materials also appear to be generating renewed interest in the Nunivak dialect by linguists (e.g., Jacobson 2003; Woodbury 1999).

## Population

As I have previously argued (Pratt 1997:21; 2001:41), the available data suggest both the prehistoric and historic populations of Nunivak Island were substantially larger than originally reported in the anthropological literature (e.g., Lantis 1984:212-213; Oswalt 1967:7-8, 24). Discussion about the island's prehistoric population has little relevance to this study and would necessarily be speculative so the comments that follow concentrate on the historic era.

In 1822, Khromchenko reported the population of the *Nuniwarmiut* at 400 (Tikhmenev 1978:437; VanStone 1989:2-3); subsequent population estimates have ranged from a low of 52 to a high of 745 (Table 1). The estimates produced before 1900 had two important things in common: none constituted a comprehensive census of the island and each focused exclusively on the coastline. The importance of the second point is that caribou hunting activities in the island's interior (see Pratt 2001) may have meant part of the *Nuniwarmiut* population was absent from enumerated coastal areas—and two of the estimates were developed through summer and/or fall visits to the island, the primary seasons in which caribou hunting occurred. Other aspects of the geographic

coverage, durations and times of the year of the work that generated these and later estimates also merit consideration.

Table 1: Nunivak Island Population Estimates through 1960.

| Source | Year | Population | Settlements | Coastal Coverage |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Khromchenko | 1822 | 400 | 16 | South, east |
| 10th US Census | 1880 | 400 | --- | -unknown- |
| 11th US Census | 1891 | 745 | 15+ | North, south, east |
| 12th US Census | 1900 | 110 | 3 | Partial north |
| 13th US Census | 1910 | 131 | 10 | Partial north, south |
| 14th US Census | 1920 | 190 | 6 | Complete? |
| Curtis (1930) | 1926<br>1928 | 177<br>52 | ---<br>--- | Complete<br>-unknown- |
| 15th US Census | 1929/30 | 191 | 6 | Complete? |
| Lantis (1946) | 1940 | 203 | 7 | Complete |
| US BIA (1940) | 1940 | 218 | --- | Complete |
| State of Alaska<br>Orth (1967) | 1950 | 156<br>49 | ---<br>--- | Mekoryuk<br>Nash Harbor |
| Lantis (1958) | 1958 | 289 | 1 | Mekoryuk |
| State of Alaska | 1960 | 242 | 1 | Mekoryuk |

Khromchenko's four-day visit to Nunivak occurred in June 1822, was restricted to parts of the south and east coasts (i.e., from Cape Mendenhall northeastward to *Ingrimiut*), and did not involve more than three excursions to shore. His population estimate apparently was not broken down by settlement, and all of those reported (n=16) were presumably located within the area visited. Evaluating the accuracy of Khromchenko's estimate is problematic, but if it is granted any measure of credibility then the comparatively large number of settlements he reported in such a small section of the island is suggestive of a much larger overall population.

Unfortunately, the next population estimate—that presented in the 10th US Census—does not shed any light on this subject; in fact, it is largely useless. There is no evidence in the published census report that an enumerator actually visited Nunivak during the recording period; thus, the claim that 400 people lived on Nunivak in 1880 (US Census Office 1884:16) cannot be corroborated. The estimate was probably based on Khromchenko's 1822 account (cf. VanStone 1989:3).

Much more significant is the Nunivak census taken in July and August 1891 by Ivan Petroff, which was published as part of the 11th US Census (US Census Office 1893:6, 111-115; cf. Petroff 1892; Pratt 1997). It indicated a population of 745—nearly double that reported by Khromchenko some 70 years earlier.[44] Petroff's census is the most

[44] As explained by Pratt (1997:25 [note 15]), the population enumerated by Petroff was erroneously reported as 702 by Lantis (1984:212-213) and 559 by VanStone (1989:4).

reliable of the pre-1900 *Nuniwarmiut* population estimates, because the specific geographic coverage of the census has been determined and the information contained therein largely verified (Pratt 1997).

Although there is no evidence to answer it, the question of whether the 1836-1840 smallpox epidemic (which devastated numerous Native communities in Alaska) ever reached Nunivak is especially interesting in light of Petroff's census. The disease had reached the Kuskokwim River and Mikhailovsk Redoubt (St. Michael) by May 1838, persisted in the latter vicinity through the fall of 1838, and "evidently continued to rage up the Yukon through the spring of 1839" (Arndt 1985). Thus, the timing of the epidemic's presence in the Yukon-Kuskokwim region makes it plausible Nunivak was not spared, despite its isolation (cf. Pratt 1990:79). Whether it did or did not strike the island, however, Petroff's 1891 (1892) census makes it clear that the *Nuniwarmiut* were far more numerous than indicated in either of the earlier (1822, 1880) population estimates. In fact, prior consideration of all relevant evidence led me to conclude that an estimated 1,200 people were resident on Nunivak prior to 1900 (Pratt 2001:41), and I still endorse that view.

How does the pre-1900 *Nuniwarmiut* population size I have extrapolated square with population estimates for the island from 1900-1960? The first of these derived from an enumeration done on two days (one in July, one in September) in 1900; it covered three "settlement areas" on Nunivak's north coast and tallied 110 people (US Bureau of the

Census 1900). There was slightly better coverage during the 13th US Census, the enumerator for which visited Cape Mendenhall as well as the north coast in August-September 1910 and reported a population of 131 (US Bureau of the Census 1910). Thus, the 1900 and 1910 censuses were both based on incomplete coverage of Nunivak. At least one interesting comparison can be made between the Petroff and 1900 censuses: i.e., Petroff reported 307 residents along the island's north coast in 1891 (Pratt 1997:21-25), whereas only 110 people were enumerated in that same area in 1900. Since both censuses implied complete coverage of the north coast and were conducted at the same time of the year, these figures suggest the area experienced a population decline of about 64% in the span of one decade. Finally, the first enumeration to cover the entire island was evidently that done in August 1920 for the 14th US Census; it reported 6 villages and a total population of 190 people (US Bureau of the Census 1920)—555 fewer (74.5% less) people than Petroff had enumerated just three decades earlier. The 1920 findings are consistent with those of a census taken sometime in 1926 by Curtis (1930:6), which claimed a population of 177 people for the "whole island."[45]

For several reasons, Lantis (1946:163) doubted that the 1899-1900 epidemic of measles and influenza ever reached Nunivak (cf. Fortuine 1989:231); and there apparently are no written records to prove otherwise. But *Nuniwarmiut* oral history accounts are emphatically consistent in describing a massive population loss around 1900 (cf. Lantis

[45] An obviously incomplete census taken by Curtis (1930:6) in 1928 reported 52 people on Nunivak; the areas of the island it covered were not specified.

1984:211), a claim supported by related circumstantial evidence (Pratt 1990:79-80; 1997:21) and the census statistics just presented. Andrew Noatak, born ca. 1900, must have been referring to this epidemic in the following passage:

> [An] epidemic came before my birth. It came when my elder [brother (*Canikuryar*)] was newly born. Then my elder sibling died during the epidemic. That lasted till summer came. It carried on into summer, and prior to fall I was born (Noatak 1986a:6).

Taken together, these points are strong justification for rejecting Lantis' position and concluding that the 1899-1900 smallpox epidemic not only reached Nunivak, but also caused very high mortalities.

Other serious diseases are known to have struck the *Nuniwarmiut* after 1900 (e.g., Griffin 2004:94-95). What was probably the 1918-1919 Spanish flu evidently killed a large percentage of Mekoryuk's residents (see Lantis 1946:163); it must have caused mortalities elsewhere on the island as well. Tuberculosis, whooping cough and measles epidemics also caused population losses on Nunivak (Lantis 1946:162-163; 1984:211). But none of the post-1900 epidemics approached the devastation wrought by smallpox in 1899-1900, as the available census data indicate a relatively stable population from ca. 1910-1960 (see Table 1).

One observation should be made regarding the later census data. That is, the island's population was evidently 100% Native *Nuniwarmiut* up to the 1930 census, at which time it remained 100% *Native* but just less than 5% of the people were non-*Nuniwarmiut*. This change reflects arrival of the Lomen Brothers' reindeer herding and trading ventures to Nunivak. In 1940, Lantis (1946:162-163) reported the *Nuniwarmiut* population stood at 203 (other island residents were specifically not included). That same year, however, T. Dale Stewart (US BIA 1940) reported a total population of 218 people on the island (100% Native), about 7% of which was non-*Nuniwarmiut*. More interesting yet, Stewart's data indicate 201 of the 203 *Nuniwarmiut* were full-blooded Natives of the island (the remaining 2 individuals were ¾ *Nuniwarmiut* [with the other ¼ not specified]). These figures reinforce statements by Lantis (e.g., 1946:170, 234) regarding the infrequency of *Nuniwarmiut* intermarriage with mainland peoples.

## Cultural Distinctions

Language constitutes the most readily apparent distinction between the *Nuniwarmiut* and other Central Yup'ik populations. The dialect spoken on Nunivak Island, Cup'ig, is recognized by linguists as the most divergent of all Yup'ik dialects[46] (Hammerich 1953; Jacobson 1984:35-37; Woodbury 1984:52); it has sometimes been treated as a separate language (cf. Hammerich 1960:86; Nelson 1899:25). The linguistic situation was recently summarized as follows:

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[46] The *Nuniwarmiut* contend an even more divergent *subdialect* of Cup'ig was spoken by residents of the island's west coast (cf. Drozda 2007:102-105; Pratt 1990:82 [note 9]).

> While most linguists and native speakers agree that Cup'ig is indeed generally mutually intelligible, though not always easily, with mainland Central Yup'ik, the dialect is so divergent from mainland Central Yup'ik that some have maintained it is a separate language. Certainly, Cup'ig is the most divergent of all Yup'ik dialects...so divergent, in fact, that the Lower Kuskokwim School District publishes one version of its Native language material for Mekoryuk, the only village on Nunivak Island, and another version for all the many other villages of the lower Kuskokwim, Nelson Island, and the coast and tundra villages in between (Jacobson 2003:vii-viii).

Finally, Cup'ig shares a major trait "with the nearly extinct Siberian Yup'ik Sirenik language and with Aleut"; and "has many words found nowhere else in Eskimo, and some words found also in Aluutiq but not elsewhere in Eskimo" (Jacobson 1984:36; cf. Hammerich 1953:112-113; Jacobson 2003:x [note 6(4)]; Pratt 2001:42).

Problems of dialect and language are complex, involving multiple layers of inquiry, explanation and interpretation. For instance, each of the following questions is relevant with regard to the position of Cup'ig relative to Central Yup'ik. How are linguistic distinctions locally perceived, understood, and invoked in relation to such issues as group membership? How do linguists see the distinctions on the basis of comparative data and analysis? How did early observers, neither Native nor linguist

(and who often were only short-term visitors to the region), draw boundaries in relation to their understanding/misunderstanding of linguistic differences? Questions of this nature are rarely easy to answer.

Selected oral history interviews with Yup'ik elders from mainland communities also contain information regarding the distinctiveness of Cup'ig, however. An interview conducted by the author in 1982 with a group of four elders from the lower Yukon villages of Pilot Station and Marshall is one example. In that interview, Dan Greene of Pilot Station recalled:

> Once I had to have a translator from Tununeq [Tununak] to speak to someone from Nunivaar although we were all Yup'ik people. I couldn't understand the person from Nunivaar. That was at Tununeq. I wasn't speaking to a Kass'aq [white person]. I was speaking to a Yup'ik person from Nunivaar. I couldn't believe I needed an interpreter to speak to another Yup'ik person. These two guys [Noel Polty and Wasillie Evan] were witnesses. It was too bad I couldn't understand that guy from Nunivaar. He hardly came up to the mainland and he spoke in his own tongue. Since the person I was talking to was an old man I said to him, "The two of us are pitiful indeed. I don't find

> this amusing, but I am laughing at myself since I don't understand you and you're not even a Kass'aq" (Polty et al. 1982a:24-27).[47]

That a Tununak person could interpret in this situation merits clarification. The individual was likely able to interpret not because Nelson Island Yup'ik is all that similar to Cup'ig, but instead because he/she had probably had enough contact with *Nuniwarmiut* to have learned their dialect "as a (near-) foreign language" (Anthony Woodbury, personal communication [6 February 2009]).

Noel Polty (also of Pilot Station) followed Greene's account by flatly stating: "The people of Nunivaar do not understand me when I speak in my dialect. I do not understand them when they speak in their dialect" (Polty et al. 1982a:27). These remarks contradict previous findings that the Nunivak dialect and all other Yup'ik dialects are/were mutually intelligible (e.g., Jacobson 1984:35; Woodbury 1984:52); they are particularly significant because they derive from non-*Nuniwarmiut*. Recent work with Cup'ig language materials by Woodbury (1999, 2001) lends credence to these elders' views about the extent to which this dialect differs from those spoken by other Yup'ik populations. Woodbury offered the comments quoted below in response to a grant proposal to help the school in Mekoryuk create teaching materials for students of Cup'ig.

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[47] This is excerpted from a transcribed bilingual conversation. It has also been edited for clarity, but its context is unchanged from the original narration.

> I can read and understand the Cup'ik of Chevak. But I have tried to read, and listen to tapes of, the Cup'ig of Nunivak and I find I can get almost nowhere if my job is to precisely understand what is said. Many many of the basic words are different, as are the important derivational elements, called "postbases," which are essential to speaking and understanding. Likewise, the pronunciation, especially the "prosody" (use of stress and related dynamic features) is so different that I have great difficulty accurately transcribing and spelling what I hear on tapes from Mekoryuk (Woodbury 2001).

My request for permission to use the above passage in this study led Woodbury to reply as follows:

> You may certainly use the quotation by me. Now, thanks to the Amos' outstanding dictionary [Amos and Amos 2003] that's available, I'd back up my claim by pointing out that a comparison of the postbase lists in the Amos' and Jacobson's [1984] dictionaries are VERY different; as are the basic lexicons (Anthony Woodbury, personal communication [6 February 2009]).[48]

[48] Woodbury's remarks suggest that if linguists critically studied the 300+ taped oral history interviews conducted with Nunivak residents since the mid-1970s (see Drozda 2009:210) further differences between Cup'ig and other Eskimo languages/dialects would likely be revealed.

Also significant is Kilbuck's assertion that "The people inhabiting Nunivak Island are considered foreign by the Yupiat" (Fienup-Riordan 1988:5). In Kilbuck's usage, the 'Yupiat' included every other Eskimo population recognized as Yup'ik after ca. 1880[49]; and their territory was said to be "occupied by a people who speak one language [although] each section has a dialect of its own" (Fienup-Riordan 1988:4). These paired remarks imply that Kilbuck felt the *Nuniwarmiut* and the Yupiat spoke two different languages; however, other statements in his account (e.g., Fienup-Riordan 1988:377-379) are contradictory to this interpretation.

At least one notable aspect of place-naming practices among the *Nuniwarmiut* also appears to differ from those of other Yup'ik groups. That is, settlement names are commonly extended to adjacent hydrographic features in a way that accords "possession" of the waterbodies to the settlements. Hence, the river along which *Negermiut* ("village/residents of *Neger* [the west]") is situated is named *Negermiut Kuigat* ("river of *Negermiut*") and an associated estuary is named *Negermiut Taciat* ("estuary/bay of *Negermiut*"). Interestingly, this practice even occurs in cases where the settlement itself was actually named after a nearby landform/topographic feature: e.g., *Penacuar* ("bluff; small cliff"), *Penacuarmiut* ("village/residents of *Penacuar*"), *Penacuarmiut Kuigat* ("river of *Penacuarmiut*") and *Penacuarmiut Taciat* ("estuary/bay of *Penacuarmiut*"). This naming convention is the norm on Nunivak;

[49] Norton Sound people were not described as members of the Yupiat. This suggests Kilbuck either was not familiar with that area or realized it was essentially an Iñupiaq zone of occupation by 1880 (cf. Fienup-Riordan 1988:456 [note 13]).

however, its occurrence elsewhere in the region (e.g., Pratt 2009b; cf. Rank 2005) seems to be much less common.[50]

As previously noted, whereas all other Central Yup'ik groups had bilateral kinship systems the *Nuniwarmiut* were described as having unilineal descent groups with a patrilineal bias (Lantis 1946:239-246; 1984:216-219). Major differences between the islanders and other Yup'ik populations have also been noted in the realm of ceremonialism. Thus, Lantis (1947:21) reported that the "Feast of the Dead"—which was practiced by Eskimos on the Alaska mainland "from the Kuskokwim River north to Kotzebue Sound"—did not exist on Nunivak (cf. Lantis 1946:196). She elaborated on this point by stating that:

> [The *Nuniwarmiut*] had none of the "namesake" complex of the Lower Yukon area, which was an essential element of the Feast of the Dead there. Instead of treating a namesake as a reincarnation of the honored deceased, the Nunivakers often named a child for a living relative. Their souls were quite distinct, and hence there was no clothing of the namesake as if one were clothing and honoring the dead relative (Lantis 1947:21; cf. Curtis 1930:49-50; Fienup-Riordan 1988:461-462 [note 41]).

[50] Credit for first recognizing the possibility of this place-naming distinction goes to Robert Drozda, who has discussed it with the author informally on several occasions.

In fact, the extended discussion of ceremonialism presented in her classic monograph (Lantis 1946:182-197) does not contain a single reference to mainland groups participating in *Nuniwarmiut* ceremonies, or vice-versa. Since winter was the primary season for ceremonies, this may be explained in part by the annual absence of solid pack ice spanning the waters of Etolin Strait. In a later publication, however, Lantis (1960:16-17 [nos. 78-81]) presented a brief oral history account of a Messenger Feast at which Nelson Islanders were guests; and Curtis (1930:52-53) had previously obtained a similar account from an elderly woman. Assuming these were separate events, both apparently dated to sometime after about 1875. The Messenger Feast in the Lantis account took place in early summer (ca. 1885) somewhere along Nunivak's southern or southeastern shore, and was hastily organized following a day on which *Nuniwarmiut* hunters had harvested a number of beluga whales. In the context of that account, the feast was precipitated by results of a hunt that were clearly exceptional: it seems likely that the attendance of mainlanders at *Nunwarmiut* Messenger Feasts was probably also not typical (cf. Griffin 2004:90).

The evident lack of ceremonial interactions with mainland Yup'ik groups is all the more intriguing given the remark that "Nunivakers say their ancestors learned [the Bladder Feast] long ago from people on the mainland" (Lantis 1946:196).

Among the various technological distinctions between Nunivak and mainland peoples identified by VanStone (1989:41-42) were the caribou pit trap, the ice saw, larger and

heavier kayaks, and the traditional sled with dogs hitched at the sides. Physical remains documented by BIA researchers at former settlements and cemeteries on the island express additional distinctions between the populations, but these are primarily related to differences in the availability of particular subsistence and raw material resources.

For example, the extensive cliff formations along Nunivak's western margin are home to enormous colonies of cliff-dwelling seabirds (e.g., murres, puffins, cormorants), which were vitally important to the *Nuniwarmiut* as a food resource and for clothing and decorative material. Largely unavailable to mainland residents, seabirds and their eggs were harvested by the islanders using a technique known as "cliff-hanging": i.e., "the practice of descending and ascending cliff faces by means of skin ropes in association with using large throw-nets to capture nesting seabirds" (Pratt 1990:76). Although this subsistence harvesting technique may also have been practiced to some extent in a few other parts of the Yup'ik region (e.g., Cape Romanzof, Nelson Island, Cape Newenham) it was undoubtedly most advanced on Nunivak; and elements of the attendant technology (see Hoffman 1990) might have been unique to the *Nuniwarmiut*.

The great abundance of stone on the island was expressed in its wide use as a construction material for dwellings, graves and caches (US BIA ANCSA 1995). Lantis (1946:227-229) reported that "cairn" burials were traditionally the norm. Nearly

all of the 790 burial features recorded by BIA archeologists on Nunivak sites were constructed of stone, but cairns only represented one form (e.g., US BIA ANCSA 1995(1):44-45). Burials were commonly placed in stone-walled chambers topped with driftwood, and sometimes in rock crevices found in boulder fields and along rocky shorelines. Graves constructed of stone are far less common on the Yup'ik mainland. Another notable difference from mainland cemeteries is that Christian crosses were associated with just 9 of the 790 designated *Nuniwarmiut* burial features; 8 of these marked subsurface burials at sites located in the Nash Harbor area (i.e., *Ellikarrmiut* and *Tacirraugarmiut*). Western-style subsurface burials were introduced on Nunivak Island sometime after 1920, a date apparently associated with the arrival of non-Native school teachers (Andrew Noatak, personal communication [3 April 1990]; Jack U. Williams, Sr., personal communication [5 April 1990]). The only other cross found marked a surface burial with a lumber chamber at *Qaneryagtalegmiut.*

VanStone (1989:41) concluded that the "aboveground stone fish storage cache" was also unique to the *Nuniwarmiut.* The specific type of cache in question (see Lantis 1946:180; VanStone 1989:30) probably correlates with the storage feature identified as *kaciitar* by Nunivak elders. Circular in shape, they were constructed of stacked rocks which were "insulated" [sealed] on the outside with mud and used for preparing aged/fermented fish (US BIA ANCSA 1995(1):52). But other types of stone storage features were also built, including "rock boxes' with walls of upright slabs and enclosures with walls of stacked or piled rocks. These features were used for the

storage of not only fish but also fish eggs, wild spinach, the meat and skins of seals, and even berries (e.g., Curtis 1930:36; US BIA ANCSA 1995(1):52).

Another common use of stone was for the construction of markers along trails or cliff edges (e.g., Petroff 1892; US Census Office 1893:112). These were usually large rock piles or cairns of stacked rock. In interior areas where trails sometimes were difficult to follow the *Nuniwarmiut* used rock piles to mark the route (Smith 1989). Similar stone piles were placed along cliffs to mark the edge: they helped travelers to avoid walking over the cliff during especially foggy weather (US BIA ANCSA 1995(1):52). Rock piles beside riverbanks marked productive fishing holes (Smith 1986a). On the southwest coast, along a trail linking villages in the Cape Mendenhall vicinity with those to the west and north, there are reportedly three rock piles which were not intended to mark the trail, but instead were referred to as "good luck piles" (*nuwatat*). As a traveler passed one of these features he or she would add a rock and request good luck (e.g., in hunting) or a long life (Noatak 1986b; Smith 1986b). BIA archeologists recorded one of these 'good luck piles' at a site on the southwest coast; its dimensions [6.1 m x 5.3 m x 1.5 m high] testify to extensive past use of the site area (see US BIA ANCSA 1995(2):313-317).

Hundreds of unroofed dwelling features constructed of stone have also been documented on the island, mostly at interior sites frequented by caribou hunters (e.g., Pratt 2001). These comparatively simple structures normally had low walls of

stacked rock, but others incorporated natural rock overhangs in their construction (US BIA ANCSA 1995(1):53). Similar features may exist at scattered rocky locales in other parts of the Yup'ik region; however, none have evidently been reported to date.

One last distinction associated with this raw material is a stone carving tradition of a like not described elsewhere in the entire Bering Sea region (see Pratt and Shaw 1992). The origins, antiquity and full significance of this tradition are poorly understood, but the available evidence suggests it probably had its roots in religious or mythological aspects of the local indigenous culture.

Finally, numerous *Nuniwarmiut* settlements contained semisubterranean, multi-room house complexes that deserve some mention. Normally consisting of a men's house (*kiiyar*) linked via entryways to one or more women's houses (*ena*, *en'eg*, *en'et* [Amos and Amos 2003:111]), this type of feature was called *amilgutkellriit* by Nunivak elders and designated a "depression complex" by BIA archeologists (US BIA ANCSA 1995(1):41-42, 48-50). Griffin (2004:64) has suggested the presence of multiple such complexes at *Ellikarrmiut* may be the product of a large population at that site in late prehistoric times. Within and outside the Central Yup'ik region, researchers have explained dwelling features of this sort as having developed in response to increased social complexity or warfare (e.g., Maschner et al. 1997; Okada et al. 1982; cf. Andrews 1989:430; Nelson 1899:250-251).

Nunivak depression complexes took three different forms (US BIA ANCSA 1995(1):42), included up to 10 rooms, and were primarily (though not exclusively) correlated with winter occupations. Their existence was not definitively explained by *Nuniwarmiut* elders, but one of the most interesting explanations given was that they made communication between occupants easier (particularly in winter) because they could go from house to house without having to venture outdoors. This would also have helped retain heat inside the dwellings during cold periods of occupation (cf. US Census Office 1893:111-112). Regardless of why depression complexes were built on Nunivak, as a whole, they are substantially more complicated than those documented at sites in other areas of the Central Yup'ik region.

**Conclusion**

The *Nuniwarmiut* shared commonalities with all Eskimo/Inuit peoples and many similarities with Yup'ik populations across the region. These included social groups based on kinship and a shared language, culture and territory; with the most basic unit of society being the household (not the nuclear family). But the *Nuniwarmiut* were distinct from other Yup'ik peoples in several ways; most notably in terms of their isolated setting, Cup'ig language, the importance of migratory seabirds in their subsistence economy, and abundance/heavy use of stone as a construction material.

# CHAPTER 5: LAND USE AND SETTLEMENT HISTORY

Annual patterns of land use among the *Nuniwarmiut* were generally stable; but this does not necessarily mean individuals and families occupied the same sites and exploited the exact same resources year-to-year throughout their existence. Variability could and did occur, for reasons ranging from obvious motivations such as local resource failures to more subtle considerations like employing personal preferences to decide which site to use or resource to target during a particular season of the year (cf. Sheppard 1986).

Information about the annual subsistence rounds of the *Nuniwarmiut* are found in Griffin (2004:139-173), Lantis (1946:171-181), US BIA (1995) and VanStone (1989:7-15); collectively, this information is broadly representative of the entire island. Lantis and Griffin emphasize the subsistence practices of *Mikuryarmiut* and *Ellikarrmiut* residents, respectively; VanStone's account is a general summary; and the use histories of about 100 different Nunivak sites are detailed in the US BIA report. Resource harvesting methods and technologies of the *Nuniwarmiut* are also well documented (e.g., Drozda 2009; Griffin 2004; Hoffman 1990; Lantis 1946; Pratt 2001; US BIA 1995; VanStone 1989). Rather than repeat these earlier works, the following discussion focuses on the differential abundance of key resources in various areas of the island and local variations in annual subsistence and settlement patterns.

## Resource Availability and Variability

Nunivak Island provided a rich array of subsistence resources to its indigenous people, to the extent that no local area could be considered resource-poor. Greens and berries were probably equally available to villagers throughout the island (Lantis 1946:164) but certain species of birds, fish and marine mammals were more abundant in some parts of the island than others, either annually or seasonally. The species most often mentioned in this context have been seals, silver salmon and cliff-dwelling seabirds.

In addition to their value as a food resource, cliff-dwelling seabirds were very important for their skins (see Pratt 1990). The basic plentitude of birds on Nunivak was such that island residents were able to be highly selective about which species' skins they used for parka materials, and the skins of seabirds were greatly preferred. Unlike mainland Yup'ik populations, for example, the *Nuniwarmiut* reportedly did not use the skins of geese or loons for parkas—because the skins of those birds tore too easily (Amos and Amos 1991:20-22; Kolerok and Kolerok 1991c:8-9). They instead made parkas from the much stronger skins of murres, cormorants, horned and tufted puffins, which were hunted from spring through fall. These migratory, cliff-dwelling birds were extremely abundant on Nunivak (particularly along the west coast), but largely absent from coastal areas along the adjacent mainland. Murres and puffins were typically harvested by cliff-hanging (see Hoffman 1990; Pratt 1990; cf.

Sonne 1988:270-271, 345 [Figure 124]). This activity occurred from the birds' spring arrival at the island until their fall departure. Additionally, snow and ice falling from the cliffs in early summer regularly killed some of these birds so people would regularly check the cliff bases and retrieve any dead birds found there. "Cormorants were harvested using several different techniques, including a scaled-down version of cliff-hanging and another in which the birds were hunted at night while they slept" (Pratt 1990:76). The entire east coast of Nunivak, and most of its south and north coasts had no areas in which to cliff-hang. This made the skins, eggs and meat of cliff-dwelling seabirds all the more valuable as a resource—as well as a commodity in intra-island trade—and no doubt contributed to the development of 'ownership' type concepts related to this activity (see Chapter 6).

Although the skins of geese were not used for clothing these birds were an important food resource to the *Nuniwarmiut*; they were mainly hunted at interior lakes such as *Leqlerrsurwig* ["place to hunt molting geese"], *Anrucillug* and *Qag'an*. People from several villages often came together for such hunts, which reportedly took place over the course of one day and did not involve overnight stays. Molting geese were normally speared; and people would portage small kayaks to the lakes for use in driving any geese on the water to the shore. When cow parsnip [or, wild celery] began to ripen people knew the geese would be molting, so hunts were timed accordingly. Because of this, cow parsnip was considered to be "the ear for the molting geese" and people were forbidden to pull-up or eat that plant when molting

geese were being hunted (Amos and Amos 1991:15-22). But geese were not just hunted during the molting season: in the fall, migrating flocks from the north sometimes landed on Nunivak en route, giving the people another opportunity to harvest the birds (Lantis 1946:164). A related observation by Lantis requires clarification. Her statement that "until the large autumn migrations, bird hunting was incidental" (Lantis 1946:180) was referring to migratory waterfowl—not migratory seabirds such as murres, puffins and cormorants.

Marine mammals were available throughout the island's coastline, but harbor seals were available only in the fall and only on the north coast (such as at Nash Harbor); and while bearded seals were sometimes found on the north coast they were regularly available only on the south coast (Griffin 2004:88-89, 165)—during spring and early summer. In a typical year, seals were not available to residents on the south side of Nunivak as late in the year as they were to those on the north side (Lantis 1960:10). Nets made of "seal rawhide" (Lantis 1946:172) were used to take seals in spring at several places on the south coast—but not in fall, as on the north coast (Lantis 1946:152, 173). Seals were tremendously important in the *Nuniwarmiut* economy: this is indicated by the estimate that *Mikuryarmiut* residents alone annually harvested at least 500 seals—"even in a poor year" (Lantis 1946:173).

Lantis (1946:164) suggests walrus were most common along the east coast, but they were also found on the south coast around Cape Mendenhall (Noatak 1986c:6-7) and

on the north coast from *Miqsarmiut* to *Iqugmiut* in summer (Smith 1989). Most walrus were taken during spring sealing but dead animals that drifted ashore were also utilized (Lantis 1946:173, 180). Altogether, Lantis (1946:173) estimated the people of *Mikuryarmiut* annually obtained about 35 walrus. Belugas were sometimes available in spring and early summer, typically on the south coast (cf. Lantis 1946:163). Large whales were not hunted but on rare occasions they got tangled up in seal nets badly enough that people could kill them (Noatak 1986b:10-13; cf. Lantis 1946:173). Also, the carcasses of harpooned whales lost by whaling ships sometimes washed up on Nunivak's south and west shores (e.g., Lantis 1960:49-50). When this happened the people harvested as much of the animals (e.g., meat, sinew, oil) as possible, depending on the states of deterioration of the carcasses.

Silver salmon were evidently most abundant on the south coast around Cape Mendenhall, and along the east coast (Griffin 2004:88; cf. Lantis 1946:164). In 1891, Petroff claimed an east coast village called "Upper Chuligmiut" [i.e., *Qaviayarmiut* (Pratt 1997:22, 25)] had the best silver salmon on Nunivak and indicated its residents traded these fish "with people of other parts of the island where salmon is relatively scarce" (US Census Office 1893:114). The accuracy of his claim about the comparative quality of silver salmon at that particular village is indeterminate; but Petroff's comment about intra-island trade involving these fish is consistent with *Nuniwarmiut* oral accounts about trading of resources between residents of different areas on the island (e.g., Pratt 1990).

Brief remarks about two other resources are warranted due to their general lack of coverage in previous accounts. As recently illuminated by Drozda (2009), Pacific cod was a very important subsistence resource in spring and early summer. Cod were harvested from the same sites people occupied for spring sealing, usually immediately after seal hunting had concluded. They evidently were available throughout the island's coastline; however, the west coast's cliffs and deep, near-shore waters probably made cod fishing more dangerous and less productive in that area. Pacific cod may experience long-term cyclical population declines (e.g., Drozda 2009). One interesting piece of data collected by Drozda (2009:122-129) about the islanders' use of cod involves how the fish were processed: i.e., the *Nuniwarmiut* had a strong preference for drying cod on large, flat rocks. Since such rocks were not found along all areas of the coast, cod were often processed some distance from where they were harvested. People have reported catching cod at *Ciguralegmiut*, for instance, then transporting them more than three miles north to *Itegmiut* for processing. This raises the possibility that some people may have based decisions about where to fish for cod as much on proximity to suitable processing areas as on where they felt the most cod could be caught.

Finally, driftwood was a critical non-subsistence resource that was not equally available in all areas of the island. The greatest abundance of driftwood was reportedly along the east coast (Lantis 1946:164): originating in the Kuskokwim

River drainage, it was carried to Nunivak by the currents of Etolin Strait (*Akularer*). These currents benefited parts of the north coast in a similar way. In most years, driftwood was relatively scarce along the remainder of the coastline (cf. Lantis 1946:163); however, changes in the normal storm patterns have previously caused driftwood to accumulate in areas where this resource was not usually so abundant. In late winter people harvested willow branches to supplement their dwindling supplies of driftwood (Lantis 1946:177). Lantis described the overall value of driftwood to the *Nuniwarmiut* as follows:

> One must not overlook the importance of sites for gathering driftwood...When every person's dish, besides storage bowls, buckets, and other containers, were made of driftwood, the personal dishes and masks replaced annually, and when houses, umiaks, kayaks, sleds, dozens of implement handles, and miscellaneous small items were made of wood, the sites for obtaining it were as important as sealing sites. Not to mention also fuel for home fires and sweatbaths. People traded for good logs as they traded for good skins (Margaret Lantis, personal communication [14 January 1987]; cf. Alix and Brewster 2004).

Consideration of driftwood in this discussion serves as a reminder that historic land use patterns were not driven exclusively by the quest for food resources. It also underscores the reality that success in subsistence economies depended on people

being adaptable and taking advantage of needed resources (whether food or raw material) as they were encountered.

### Local Variations in Subsistence and Settlement Patterns

Annual subsistence and settlement patterns among the *Nuniwarmiut* were broadly uniform. The family was the basic economic, social and ceremonial unit, with the association of families in the household being the next highest unit (Lantis 1946:159). Individual households at winter villages might contain as many as three or four families, all relatives, but smaller households were characteristic of settlements occupied in other seasons (Lantis 1946:159). Some two-family households occasionally remained together for much of the year, however, most individual families dispersed to their preferred camps from spring through fall then aggregated with others in "home" or "base" villages for the winter months. Winter villages could be comprised of a single extended family, but most included multiple families. In any event, when spring returned families again scattered to their customary camps and the cycle was repeated.

The lengths of time spent at seasonal camps or engaged in specific subsistence activities was not consistent from family to family, and not necessarily even year-to-year for any given family. Although a specific array of seasonal camps tended to be associated with each winter village those camps could be, and often were, used by residents of other winter villages (e.g., Lantis 1946:159). Thus, the normal pattern of

annual land use included considerable variability (cf. Lantis 1946:179-180)—mostly in the context of personal competencies in particular subsistence activities or preferences for specific subsistence resources (cf. Sheppard 1986:294-295, 310-311).

Local geography and microenvironments sometimes facilitated the development of specialization: e.g., a family that regularly summer camped along *Tacirrlag* (Duchikthluk Bay) might emphasize salmon fishing, whereas another living at *Carwarmiut* instead focused on caribou hunting. If a family contained one marginally skilled seal hunter, or none, it likewise might forego sealing and devote its collective energy to cod and herring fishing while at spring camp. Families, like individuals, were not equally capable at or equipped to pursue every possible subsistence activity (e.g., Wolfe 1987; Wolfe et al. 2007; cf. Sahlins 1972).

On Nunivak, the most pronounced variability in the subsistence realm concerned the harvesting of migratory seabirds by cliff-hanging. Based on personal experiences and testimony of their ancestors, several Nunivak elders reported that certain men were so adept at cliff-hanging that it became their primary means of livelihood (cf. Pratt 1990). While the birds were present (from spring to fall) such men spent most of their subsistence "work time" on the cliffs. This high degree of specialization was possible because these birds were only available in certain parts of the island and they had high economic value; in fact, their skins were traded with other island residents to obtain numerous other products (e.g., fish, bearded seal skins).

Although the data are sketchy, caribou hunting may have been another activity at which some men became highly specialized. Caribou could no doubt be found throughout the island, but physical and ethnographic evidence suggests they were most abundant in the western and southern interior reaches of Nunivak—specifically around the prominent landforms of *Ing'errlag*, *Entul'i*, *Qiurtul'i* and *Siimal'eg*.

## Place Names Documentation

It is not possible to accurately reconstruct the settlement history of an indigenous group without a thorough knowledge of the place names that adorned its landscape. This is especially true for groups whose historic movements on the land are documented orally, like the *Nuniwarmiut*. Written accounts containing associated information about this population are chiefly limited to census records, the most useful of which are also tied to named places on the island—though the reported names (phonetically-spelled or otherwise anglicized) sometimes bear little resemblance to the verified Native correlates. Linking actual Nunivak sites with place names reported by outsiders is often problematic; but the documentation and compilation of over 1,000 Cup'ig place names (e.g., Drozda 1994)—most of which are physically verified—enormously simplifies this task. The tandem of an extensive place names collection and the massive body of Nunivak site data gathered by BIA researchers allows such correlations to be made at a very high level of confidence,

even when the reported vs. actual site names are completely different (e.g., "Upper Chuligmiut"/*Qaviayarmiut*; "Olevigamiut"/*Unguliwigmiut*).

As eloquently explained in the following quote, however, *Nuniwarmiut* place names are more than just identifiers for specific locations on the island landscape:

> On Nunivak Island the systematic written documentation of place names and the development of accurate maps are relatively recent phenomena. In earlier times this information was conveyed orally and individuals carried their maps in their minds. Individuals were mentally outfitted for travel, each with varying skill, by a unique combination of geographical knowledge and natural history as well as with information and stories which they had heard from their elders. The majority of the names recalled by contemporary elders have been in place since long before their births. The meanings behind the names (and here I do not mean the "English meanings" or translations) embody ancient relationships with the land and are imbued with personal life experiences. Thus, place names continue to serve as aggregates of cultural knowledge. Place names are mnemonic, helping one to remember places and events while at the same time fusing mental images with physical geography. They remain, like icons, representative of a continuum of history, culture and knowledge which was/is important for the maintenance of the physical and

> spiritual identity of the people. When a name is forgotten, more than a name is lost (Drozda 1994:ix).

Thus, in addition to their value relative to the ethnohistorical problems on which the present study is based, place names can help resurrect forgotten or dying pieces of local culture and history. The names also are instructive about perceptions of the natural world. For example, only a handful of Cup'ig place names are based on personal names (e.g., *Acakcum Nunii* ["land of *Acakcug*"]): this implies the significance of individuals within the natural environment was conceptually very different among the *Nuniwarmiut* than in Western society generally. That is, the *Nuniwarmiut* were not prone to honoring people by affixing their names to points on the landscape.[51]

**Chronologies and Seasonal Site Affiliations of Principal Winter Villages**

Since winter villages were a core component of social group identity among the *Nuniwarmiut* they merit special attention in this study. Winter generally lasted at least six months, from about October through March; but weather conditions could result in earlier starts and/or later terminations of winter occupations. Herein, sites are designated as winter villages based on either their documented occupations as such in written or oral history accounts, or converging lines of circumstantial

[51] But also, as Phyllis Morrow (personal communication [31 March 2009]) reminded me, due to restrictions on the use of personal names (e.g., Lantis 1984:219) one might expect less use of them as place names.

evidence. As the comments to follow show, however, winter villages here were not the same type of settlement as those described for some other Alaska Eskimo populations (e.g., Burch 2006:102-106).

With specific regard to Nunivak, designating some sites as "villages" and others as "camps" also raises certain semantic and interpretive issues. Apart from their assigned place names, for instance, the only terminological distinction that seems to have been made between different settlements concerned their respective seasons of occupation. That is, *Nuniwarmiut* oral history accounts indicate any habitation site could appropriately be labeled a "village"—regardless what season(s) of the year it was occupied or what subsistence activities it supported. Also, the joint presence of a men's community house (*kiiyar*) and semisubterranean dwellings at a site is not sufficient grounds to interpret it as having been occupied in winter, since these features occur at *Nuniwarmiut* settlements occupied during any season of the year (cf. Lantis 1946:159, 162); this is true as well for "depression complexes."

Some "winter villages" were occupied (at some level) year-round, but many were not. In fact, virtually all of these sites have also been used in other seasons, either prior to being occupied as winter villages or after winter occupations had ceased. It would therefore be inaccurate to assume that winter villages were only that, and nothing more. Designating a site as a winter village also does not imply that it was large in area and/or population; in fact, the number of residents and occupied dwellings at any

winter village varied throughout its history of use. Winter villages tended to be larger than other settlements, in terms of both population and number of dwellings; but some consisted of a single dwelling occupied by one family (nuclear or extended). Thus, the number of surface features recorded at a site also is not a reliable indicator of whether or not it was once a winter village. In fact, *Nuniwarmiut* oral history accounts clearly imply that the largest accumulations of people occurred at highly-productive sealing locales (e.g., *Ellikarrmiut/Qimugglugpagmiut*, *Englullrarmiut*, *Ciguralegmiut*, *Tacirrarmiut*). This suggests winter villages that were also occupied for spring or fall sealing in the same annual cycle experienced population increases when sealing was in progress (cf. Griffin 2004:164).

Finally, any assumption that "camps" are sites of comparatively lesser significance than "villages" must be specifically abandoned relative to discussions of *Nuniwarmiut* settlements. Many of the sites termed camps herein were continuously occupied for several months at a time, annually, and were critically important in the local subsistence economy (cf. Oswalt 1967:86). Additionally, the only habitation sites that did not contain semisubterranean structures are either: (a) old caribou hunting encampments situated in inland settings, and almost always on very rocky ground; or (b) cliff-top, coastal sites from which seabirds were hunted. But many of these sites also contained permanent dwelling structures, above-ground in design and made of stone (e.g., see Pratt 2001). This underscores the fact that tents were not used on Nunivak Island until sometime after World War II (cf. Lantis 1946:162). Thus, in the

comments that follow I use the term 'camp' for the sake of convenience: it allows me to more cleanly describe connections between particular winter villages and sites their former residents used in other seasons of the year.

With these points in mind, the known and probable winter villages that have been identified on Nunivak Island are discussed below. They are generally presented in geographic order, beginning at Cape Etolin at the northeast corner and moving clockwise around the coast (see Table 2; Figure 3). Each of the listed villages had an associated cemetery (or cemeteries) and contained a minimum of one *kiiyar*; also, some were comprised of multiple parcels—often individually named (US BIA 1995; cf. Drozda 1994). The number of semisubterranean dwellings/houses recorded or estimated at each village in 1986 (US BIA 1995) is noted to provide an idea of comparative site sizes.

Prehistoric use of most of these villages is strongly suspected, if not documented; but the use summaries that follow are purposefully restricted to the historic period.

Table 2: Historic Nuniwarmiut Winter Villages, 1880-1960.

| | |
|---|---|
| 1) Pengurpagmiut | 17) Ciguralegmiut |
| 2) Mikuryarmiut | 18) Iquarmiut |
| 3) Qavlumiut | 19) Ucingurmiut |
| 4) Kangirrlagmiut | 20) Penacuarmiut |
| 5) Qaneryagtalegmiut | 21) Kenirlermiut |
| 6) Am'igtulirmiut | 22) Asweryagmiut |
| 7) Ingrimiut | 23) Carwarmiut |
| 8) Cikuyuilngurmiut | 24) Qayigyalegmiut |
| 9) Paamiut (Cuqucuryarmiut) | 25) Talungmiut |
| 10) Nuqariillermiut | 26) Tacirrarmiut |
| 11) Kiiwigmiut | 27) Miqsarmiut |
| 12) Nunarrlugarmiut | 28) Ellikarrmiut (Qimugglugpagmiut) |
| 13) Tacirmiut | 29) Negermiut |
| 14) Qengartaaremiut (Narulkinarmiut) | 30) Kangiremiut |
| 15) Itegmiut | 31) Igwaryarermiut |
| 16) Englullugmiut | 32) Cugg'egmiut |

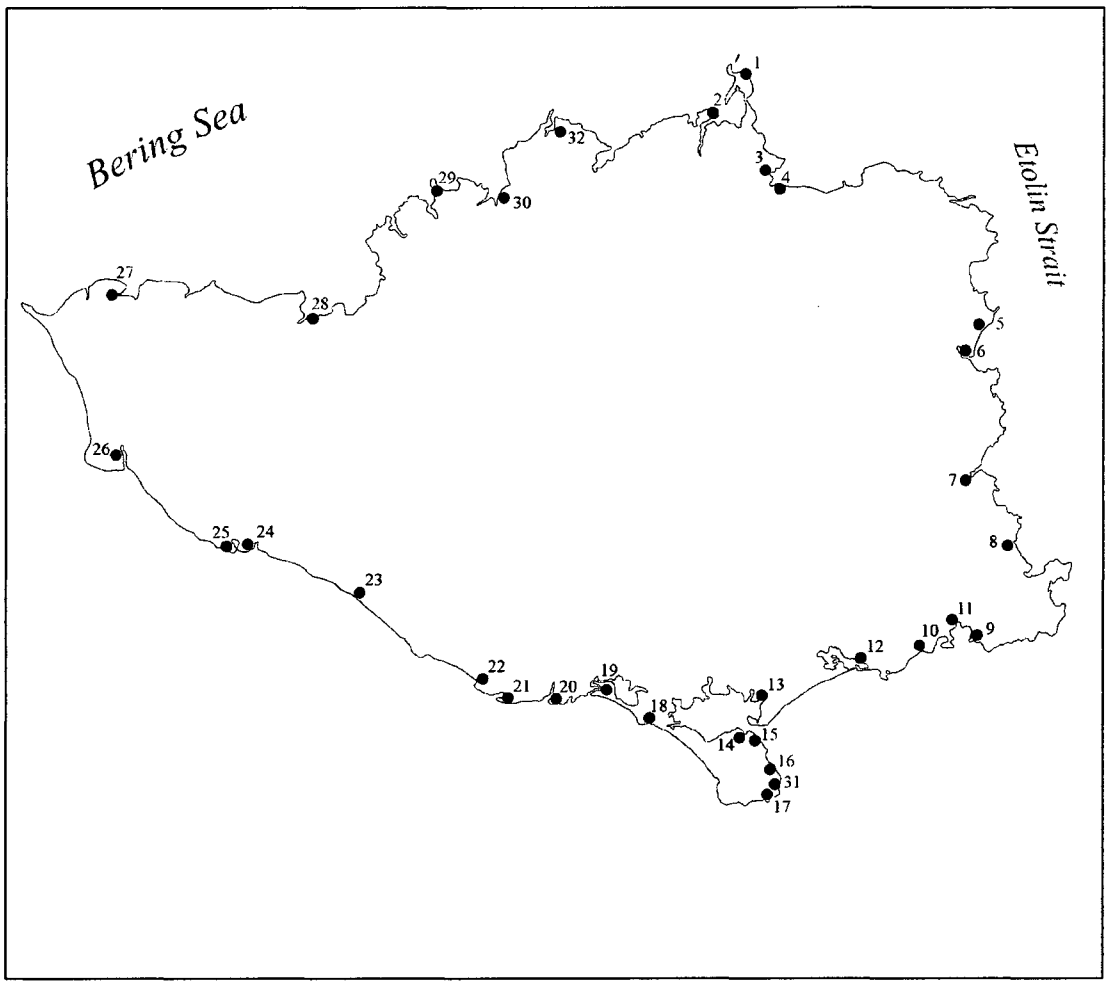


Figure 3: Principal Winter Villages, 1880-1960

1) *Pengurpagmiut* ('village/residents of the dunes'): large site on Cape Etolin containing an estimated 30-40 houses; it was occupied as a winter village until ca. 1910-1920 when its residents relocated to *Mikuryarmiut* (Mekoryuk), thereafter using *Pengurpagmiut* as a spring and summer camp. The 1890 US Census identified this site as "Koot" [52] (cf. VanStone 1989:ii [Fig. 1]) and reported its population as 117

[52] Derivation of the name 'Koot' is uncertain. Its correlation with specific sites relies on associated locational information contained in the source references.

people in July 1891 (Petroff 1892; US Census Office 1893:6, 111-115; cf. Pratt 1997). In some cases, the place name "*Pengurpagmiut*" may apply to a complex that includes the village of this name and two closely adjacent sites (also located on Cape Etolin): *Kialiraluarmiut* and *Unguliwigmiut.*

When occupied as a winter village, seasonal movements of *Pengurpagmiut* residents probably conformed very closely to those described for *Mikuryarmiut* (see below).

2) *Mikuryarmiut* ('village/residents of abundance'): the number of semisubterranean dwellings once present at *Mikuryarmiut* could not be determined in 1986 because the site is overlain by the modern village of Mekoryuk. *Mikuryarmiut* was probably originally a summer camp for *Pengurpagmiut* people; it became a winter village sometime after 1890 (likely between ca. 1900-1920). Historical accounts sometimes identify this site as "Koot" (see Pratt 1997:25 [note 11]). Its population was reported as 79 [in 18 households] in January 1930 (US Census 1930); 125 [in 23 households] in October 1939 (Lantis 1946:317); 132 [*Nuniwarmiut* 117, "other Eskimos" 15] in January 1940 (Lantis 1946:162); 113 [in 22 households] in Spring 1940 (Lantis 1946:163); 156 in 1950 (State of Alaska, DCRA); 289 [in 40 households] in January 1958 (Lantis 1958); and 242 in 1960 (State of Alaska, DCRA; Orth 1967:1, 633).[53] A

[53] A database maintained by the State of Alaska, Division of Community and Regional Affairs (DCRA) erroneously reports 117 people lived at this village in 1880: that figure is actually derived from the 1890 census and applied to *Pengurpagmiut* (i.e., "Koot"). This same database also erroneously applies island-wide population figures for 1910, 1920, 1930 and 1940 to Mekoryuk alone.

census taken between March and May 1940 lists 104 people in 25 households (BIA Census 1940). Since about 1960 this has been the only permanently occupied village on Nunivak.

During *Mikuryarmiut's* occupation as a winter village (from ca. 1890-1960) its residents are known to have used the sites to follow as seasonal camps. Their main spring and summer sealing, marine mammal hunting and fishing camps were *Pengurpagmiut*, *Taprarmiut*, *Englullrarmiut*, *Kangirrlagmiut* and *Cingigarmiut*. Some residents also went spring seal netting at *Aqitur*, which was used more extensively for the same purpose in fall. The *Iq'ug* (Cape Mohican) area was where they hunted cliff-dwelling birds in summer and fall—during which seasons they also hunted caribou, probably not traveling further into the island's interior than the vicinity of *Ingrilukat Nasqurr'at.*

3) *Qavlumiut* ('village/residents of the eyebrow'): containing about 10 houses, historic occupations of this site as a winter village ended by 1950—when it was abandoned as part of the population centralization process. Never a large village, it contained 10 residents in January 1930 (US Census 1930); 15 in 1939 and 12 in 1940 (Lantis 1946:162). A report that 5 people [in 1 household] were at the site in April 1940 (BIA Census 1940) suggests it may also have been used as a spring camp.

The former winter residents of *Qavlumiut* normally went to *Taprarmiut*, *Englullrarmiut* or the Cape Etolin area for spring and summer sealing, marine mammal hunting and fishing. Their summer/fall caribou hunting grounds probably did not extend beyond about *Ingrilukat Nasqurr'at*, in Nunivak's central interior.

4) *Kangirrlagmiut* ('village/residents of the major corner/bay'): biographical information recorded by Lantis (1960:70-71) documents occupations of this site as a winter village from at least ca. 1908-1919; it was probably abandoned as a result of the 1918-1921 flu epidemic. The site was also used as a spring and summer camp (for sealing and fishing). In 1986, it was estimated to contain 10-15 houses. Data regarding seasonal movements of former winter residents of *Kangirrlagmiut* are limited, but they evidently used the Cape Etolin area for spring sealing.

5) *Qaneryagtalegmiut* ('village/residents of the place with many mouths or many things to say'): historic occupations as a winter village continued through at least 1940, when it had 5 residents (Lantis 1946:162). It was abandoned as a winter village by 1950, due to the population centralization process; but spring and summer occupations also occurred. The site had a reported population of 46 [in 12 households] in August 1920 (US Census 1920); 10 [in 2 households] in January 1930 (US Census 1930); and 7 [in 2 households] in April 1940 (BIA Census 1940). Seasonal use of the site continued through at least 1986, at which date it contained the remains of 8 dwellings.

People who occupied *Qaneryagtalegmiut* as a winter village went to *Englullrarmiut*, *Kangirrlagmiut* or *Nuugavluarmiut* for spring sealing, sea mammal hunting and cod fishing. Their interior forays for summer/fall caribou hunting likely did not extend beyond about *Ingrilukat Nasqurr'at*.

6) *Am'igtulirmiut* ('village/residents of the one with many entrances'): containing about 15-20 houses, this site was apparently occupied as a winter village at one time but little is known of its use as such. Winter occupations probably ended in connection with the population centralization process, but the site has also been used as a summer fish camp. This is likely the site reported as "Chuligmiut" with a population of 32 in July-August 1891 (Petroff 1892; US Census Office 1893:114; cf. Pratt 1997:21-25).

Winter residents of *Am'igtulirmiut* normally used *Englullrarmiut* as their spring sealing, marine mammal hunting and cod fishing camp. *Ingrilukat Nasqurr'at* presumably marked the interior limit of their summer/fall caribou hunting grounds.

7) *Ingrimiut* ('village/residents of the mountain'): winter occupations of this site ended between ca. 1925-1935, apparently in connection with the US Bureau of Education's establishment of a school at Nash Harbor (i.e., *Qimugglugpagmiut*) in 1924. The site contains 25 houses (with 1 depression complex). *Ingrimiut* has also

been occupied as a camp in all four seasons of the year, and has recently been used for summer fishing and berry picking. The site clearly was occupied in June 1822 (US BIA 1995(1):11-12; cf. VanStone 1973:64), and it contained 35 residents in July-August 1891 (Petroff 1892; US Census Office 1893:6, 114). In August 1920 a total of 42 people [in 12 households] resided at this site (US Census 1920). Seasonal use of *Ingrimiut* continued through at least 1986, but it is now completely abandoned.

During *Ingrimiut's* tenure as a winter village its residents used *Cingigmiut* and *Nuuteqermiut* for spring and summer sealing, marine mammal hunting and fishing. They probably went inland as far as about *Ing'errlag* (Mt. Roberts) and *Ingrilukat Nasqurr'at* when hunting caribou in the summer and fall.

8) *Cikuyuilngurmiut* ('village/residents of the one that never freezes'): apparently abandoned as a winter village due to an epidemic sometime in the early 1900s (US BIA 1995(2):24-25), this site contains 15 houses (with 2 depression complexes). Past winter residents of *Cikuyuilngurmiut* used to go to *Cingigmiut* and *Nuuteqermiut* for spring sealing, sea mammal hunting and cod fishing; they probably hunted caribou in summer and fall inland to the area of *Ing'errlag*.

Oral accounts indicate at least one family formerly occupied *Cikuyuilngurmiut* for summer fishing, and it was used as a fall camp for bird hunting during the late 1940s.

9) *Paamiut* ('village/residents of the river mouth') [older name, *Cuqucuryarmiut* (translation unknown)]: a large site containing 62 houses (with 5 depression complexes). Historic occupations of *Paamiut* as a winter village continued through at least 1940, but such occupations ceased by 1950 (due to the population centralization process). The site has also served as a summer, fall and winter camp. Its population was reported as 22 [in 6 households] in January 1930 (US Census 1930), and 15 in January 1940 (Lantis 1946:162). *Paamiut* was the summer camp of three families in 2006 (Drozda 2009:Appendix G).

During *Paamiut's* occupation as a winter village its residents normally went to *Cingigmiut* or *Nuuteqermiut* for spring sealing, marine mammal hunting and cod fishing—but some occasionally went to *Englullrarmiut*. In summer they used *Kiiwigmiut* and *Ingrimiut* as fish camps, and gathered wild spinach at the site of *Anarnissagarmiut*. The *Ing'errlag* area was probably where they went for summer/fall caribou hunting.

10) *Nuqariillermiut* ('village/residents of use of/one who used atlatl-type harpoon thrower'): a probable winter village prior to 1900, the site contains 16 houses (with 3 depression complexes). *Nuqariillermiut* has reportedly also been used as a spring seal hunting camp and summer/fall fish camp from which flounders were harvested (US BIA 1995(2):67-69). The site evidently has not been used since ca. 1900 and the

only known data about the seasonal movements of its former winter residents is that they used the Cape Corwin area for spring sealing.

11) *Kiiwigmiut* ('village/residents of a place to peel layers off objects'): this site was abandoned as a winter village by 1910 due to "heavy starvation," probably related to the 1899-1900 epidemic of measles and influenza. *Kiiwigmiut* was reoccupied as a winter village from ca. 1922-1925; it has also been used as a summer fish camp and for fox trapping in spring (US BIA 1995(2):72-74). In 1986, the site contained the remains of 16 houses.

During winter occupations of *Kiiwigmiut* in the 1920s its residents reportedly went to *Paamiut* and/or the Cape Corwin area for spring sealing.

12) *Nunarrlugarmiut* ('village/residents of the good old land'): historic occupations of this site as a winter village continued through at least 1940, when just 3 people lived there (Lantis 1946:162). Winter occupations had ceased by about 1945 as a direct result of centralization: i.e., its former residents relocated to either *Mikuryarmiut* or Nash Harbor [*Qimugglugpagmiut*] (US BIA 1995(2):95-97). Containing 11 houses, the site has long been used as a summer fish camp and also served as a winter camp for fox hunting. Eight families summer camped at *Nunarrlugarmiut* in 2006 (Drozda 2009:Appendix G).

The former winter residents of *Nunarrlugarmiut* used *Nuuteqermiut*, *Cingigmiut*, *Qikertaarlag* and the Cape Mendenhall area as spring camps for sealing, marine mammal hunting and cod fishing. Some went to *Iqangmiut* (and possibly *Tevcarmiut Uaqlit*) for summer fishing, and gathered wild spinach at *Anarnissagarmiut* during the same season. These people's customary summer/fall caribou hunting areas included *Entul'i* and *Ing'errlag*.

13) *Tacirmiut* ('village/residents of the estuary/bay'): a large site containing 65 houses (with 5 depression complexes). Abandoned as a winter village about 1900 due to an epidemic and/or starvation (US BIA 1995(2):119-122), *Tacirmiut* was also a major summer fish camp. Identified as "Kwigamiut," the site had a population of 43 in July-August of 1891 (US Census Office 1893:111-112). Lantis (e.g., 1960:4 [map]) referred to this site as "Kwiga'gamiut." Use of *Tacirmiut* as a summer fish camp continued through at least 1986, but it has since been completely abandoned.

Spring sealing, marine mammal hunting and cod fishing camps used by winter residents of *Tacirmiut* included *Amyag*, *Ciguralegmiut* and *Nuuteqermiut*. Some of these people probably went to *Carwarmiut* in summer to fish for cod, silver salmon and Dolly Varden. The areas around *Ing'errlag* and *Entul'i* were their normal caribou hunting grounds.

14) *Qengartaaremiut* ('village/residents of the nose-like object' [older name, *Narulkirnarmiut* ('village/residents of use of sealing spears/seal harpoons')]: a large site containing 70 houses (with 13 depression complexes and 3 *kiiyat*) "the big flu epidemic" [1899-1900] killed many residents of this village, leading most of the survivors to relocate to *Itegmiut* (Drozda 1994:66-70).[54] The site was finally abandoned as a winter village about 1920, due in part to another epidemic; but the 1924 establishment of a school at Nash Harbor [*Qimugglugpagmiut*] was probably also a factor. The site has also been used as a spring seal hunting camp, and repeatedly occupied as a summer fish camp (US BIA 1995(2):154-158). In 2006 it was used as a summer camp by two families (Drozda 2009:Appendix G).

People who wintered at *Qengartaaremiut* are known to have used *Ciguralegmiut*, *Tacirrarmiut* and *Qikertarrlag* for spring sealing, marine mammal hunting and cod fishing. Some of them camped at *Tacirmiut* and *Ciqengmiut* for summer fishing. In fall the people of this village might go to *Penacuarmiut* to hunt cormorants, *Carwarmiut* for Dolly Varden fishing and puffin hunting, *Qayigyalegmiut* for Dolly Varden fishing, and/or Nash Harbor for seal netting. They evidently went inland to the *Entul'i* area for caribou hunting.

[54] The presence of a freshwater spring may have been a factor in the location of this settlement, which is not directly situated along a stream. Freshwater springs may have influenced the locations of other settlements not situated along streams (Robert Drozda, personal communication [3 April 2009]).

15) *Itegmiut* ('village/residents of lower part of foot'): accounts about this site's chronology as a winter village are inconsistent (e.g., Drozda 1994:66-70; US BIA 1995(2):172-174), but there is agreement that it was initially occupied as such prior to 1900. Mortalities caused by the 1899-1900 epidemic of measles and influenza reportedly led some residents of *Qengartaaremiut* to relocate to *Itegmiut*; however, that same epidemic reportedly also struck *Itegmiut* and induced a temporary abandonment of the village. If *Itegmiut* was, in fact, abandoned at that time it had apparently been reoccupied as a winter village by ca. 1905 and functioned in that capacity until about 1935, when establishment of a store at *Mikuryarmiut* led to its permanent abandonment. Related factors may have been the establishment (also at *Mikuryarmiut*) of an Evangelical Covenant Church in 1936-1937 and a Bureau of Indian Affairs school in 1939. *Itegmiut* has also served as a spring, summer and winter camp. A population of 42 people was reported at the site in August 1920 (US Census 1920). The site contains 18 houses (with 3 depression complexes and 3 *kiiyat*).

When *Itegmiut* was occupied as a winter village its residents usually went to *Ciguralegmiut* or *Englullugmiut* for spring sealing, marine mammal hunting and cod fishing. They are known to have used the following as summer fish camps: *Nunangnerrmiut*, *Iwerwigmiut*, *Kuigaaremiut*, *Kangirtulirmiut*, *Ucingurmiut*, *Mecagmiut*, *Penacuarmiut* and *Kangirrlagmiut*. In fall these people often went bird hunting at *Penacuarmiut* and *Carwarmiut*, and seal netting at *Aqitur* and Nash

Harbor. Inland areas near *Entul'i* were apparently their main caribou hunting grounds.

16) *Englullugmiut* ('village/residents of area with a healthy growth of coarse grass'): this site contains 12 houses (with 2 depression complexes) and was apparently abandoned as a winter village between about 1905-1939; it has also been occupied as a spring camp for seal hunting and cod-fishing (US BIA 1995(2):189-190). The site was briefly used as a cod-fishing site by several families in the early summer of 1986. There are no known data regarding seasonal movements of past winter residents of *Englullugmiut*.

17) *Ciguralegmiut* ('village/residents of place of pigeon guillemots'): a large site containing 60 houses (with 6 depression complexes and 2 *kiiyat*). Nuniwarmiut biographies indicate *Ciguralegmiut* was occupied as a winter village on numerous occasions between ca. 1880-1913 (Lantis 1960:30, 65-66). It evidently contained 20 people in August-September 1910 (US Bureau of the Census 1910) and 29 people [in 7 households] in February 1930 (US Census 1930). The site was also a very important spring and summer camp, and apparently continued to be used as such through ca. 1970 (Nowak 1967:7; Orth 1967:209; US BIA 1995(2):198-201; cf. Lantis 1946:162); however, the intensity of site use decreased dramatically after ca. 1940, due to the opening of a school at *Mikuryarmiut*.

Most people who wintered at *Ciguralegmiut* generally remained there through the spring for sealing, marine mammal hunting, cod and hooligan fishing; but others reportedly used *Amyag* and *Kenirlermiut* as spring camps for the same purposes. Some *Ciguralegmiut* people summer camped at *Asweryagmiut*, presumably for fishing. *Entul'i* was the main place they went for summer/fall caribou hunting.

18) *Iquarmiut* ('village/residents of the end'): former winter village abandoned by ca. 1910 for unknown reasons. It has also reportedly been occupied as a fall and winter camp, for seal hunting and fox trapping (US BIA 1995(2):237-238). Fourteen houses (with two depression complexes) were recorded at *Iquarmiut* in 1986. Information concerning seasonal movements of this site's former winter residents is limited to knowledge that they used the Cape Mendenhall area for spring sealing.

19) *Ucingurmiut* ('village/residents of a place to take on cargo'): biographical information reported by Lantis (1960:35) indicates this site was occupied as a winter village in ca. 1919; other winter occupations may also have occurred, but this was principally a summer fish camp (US BIA 1995(2):241-142). It remained in use as a summer camp through at least 1986. The site contains eight houses. Specific seasonal camps formerly used by winter residents of *Ucingurmiut* are not known, but they apparently went to the vicinity of *Asweryagmiut* for spring sealing.

20) *Penacuarmiut* ('village/residents of the small cliffs'): a large site containing 60 houses (with 7 depression complexes), it was abandoned as a winter village about 1900 due to mortalities associated with an epidemic (probably measles and influenza). The site has also been used as a camp in every season of the year—including fishing (e.g., Dolly Varden, blackfish) in spring and summer, and seal netting and cormorant hunting in fall (US BIA 1995(2):266-268).

When occupied as a winter village, the residents of *Penacuarmiut* are reported to have used *Amyag* and *Kenirlermiut* for spring sealing, marine mammal hunting, cod and hooligan fishing; and *Ucingurmiut* as a summer fish camp. *Entul'i* was the main area they went to for caribou hunting.

21) *Kenirlermiut* ('village/residents of a good landing spot for kayaks'): apparent winter village abandoned before 1900, probably due to the 1899-1900 epidemic of measles and influenza. But *Kenirlermiut*—which contains 10 houses—primarily functioned as a spring camp for seal hunting and hooligan fishing, and a base for fall cormorant hunting (US BIA 1995(2):277-279). It may be the settlement identified as "Kanagmiut" with a population of 41 in July-August 1891 (Petroff 1892; US Census Office 1893:6; cf. Pratt 1997:21-25). There is no information describing the past seasonal movements of winter residents of this site.

22) *Asweryagmiut* ('village/residents of the place of many beached walrus'): former winter village containing 20 houses (with 2 depression complexes), apparently abandoned before 1900. The site has also been occupied as a summer camp and fall camp, the latter in connection with the harvesting of cliff-dwelling seabirds (US BIA 1995(2):285-286; cf. Lantis 1946:154, 162). *Asweryagmiut* residents used *Qaugyit* as a spring/summer camp for cliff-hanging, but other seasonal movements associated with past winter residents of this village are unknown.

23) *Carwarmiut* ('village/residents of the result of strong current, or stream with a strong current'): a large site containing 50 houses (with 2 *kiiyat*), it was probably occupied as a winter village prior to 1900. This was also an important summer camp (for cod and silver salmon fishing and the harvesting of cliff-dwelling seabirds); it has been used as a fall fish camp (for Dolly Varden) and winter camp for caribou hunting and furbearer trapping as well (US BIA 1995(2):299-301). Use of *Carwarmiut* as an overnight camp still occurs on an irregular basis.

Some winter residents of *Carwarmiut* apparently used *Qaugyit* as a spring/summer camp for cliff-hanging and the general area of *Asweryagmiut* for spring sealing. *Entul'i* was the principal caribou hunting site for *Carwarmiut* people.

24) *Qayigyalegmiut* ('village/residents of place with spotted seals'): a large site containing 51 houses (with 5 depression complexes), reportedly occupied as a winter

village prior to ca. 1900. It has more recently been used as a spring sealing camp and a summer/fall fish camp, but evidently was abandoned prior to 1950 (US BIA 1995(2):321-323). The site had 19 residents [in 5 households] in August 1920 (US Census 1920).

Winter residents of *Qayigyalegmiut* used the Cape Mohican area for spring sealing, *Talungmiut* for summer fishing, Nash Harbor for fall seal netting, and the areas of *Qiurtul'i* and *Siimal'eg* for summer/fall caribou hunting.

25) *Talungmiut* ('village/residents of *Talung* [natural projection that blocks view of village from the sea]'): biographical information suggests winter occupations of this site, which contains 17 houses, occurred through ca. 1930 (Lantis 1960:91-96; cf. Lantis 1946:162), probably sporadically. But it was mainly used as a spring, summer and/or fall camp associated with sealing, fishing, and the harvesting of cliff-dwelling seabirds. In March 1940 there were 16 people [in 2 households] residing at the site (BIA Census 1940). Regular use of *Talungmiut* began to decrease soon thereafter, due to the island's school being moved from Nash Harbor [*Qimugglugpagmiut*] to *Mikuryarmiut*. The site was occupied as a summer camp by one family in 2006 (Drozda 2009: Appendix G).

Past winter residents of *Talungmiut* usually went to *Ciguralegmiut* for spring sealing, marine mammal hunting and cod fishing, but some instead went to Cape Mohican—

or to *Tacirrarmiut* to hunt seals and cliff-hang for birds. The main summer camps associated with this village were *Tacirmiut*, *Kuigaaremiut* and *Tevcarmiut Uaqlit*, all of which were used for salmon fishing. People could also opt to remain at *Talungmiut* throughout much of the summer, focusing their attention on cliff-hanging for the abundant seabirds nearby. In fall, they often fished for Dolly Varden at *Carwarmiut* and *Qayigyalegmiut*, and went to Nash Harbor for seal netting. *Qiurtul'i* and *Siimal'eg* were their recognized caribou hunting grounds.

26) *Tacirrarmiut* ('village/residents of the small estuary'): a large site containing 58 houses (with 2 depression complexes), its occupation as a winter village began sometime prior to 1900 and continued through at least 1940. The site was probably abandoned by 1945 due to centralization of the *Nuniwarmiut* to *Qimugglugpagmiut* [Nash Harbor] and/or *Mikuryarmiut*. *Tacirrarmiut* was also used as a spring sealing camp—when fishing for cod might also take place—and as a base for winter hunting and trapping activities (US BIA 1995(3):18-23). It reportedly had a population of 17 in August-September 1919 (US Census 1910), and 15 in both January and March 1940 (Lantis 1946:162, 317).

Winter residents of *Tacirrarmiut* usually went to *Ciguralegmiut* (but sometimes to Cape Mohican) for spring sealing, marine mammal hunting and cod fishing. In summer these people commonly went cliff-hanging for birds in the *Talungmiut* area and fished for Dolly Varden at *Qayigyalegmiut* and *Carwarmiut* (both of which often

were used for the same purpose in fall). They netted seals in the fall at Nash Harbor, and some used *Iquarmiut* as a winter fox hunting camp. *Tacirrarmiut* people had recognized use rights to *Qiurtul'i* and *Siimal'eg* for caribou hunting.

27) *Miqsarmiut* ('village/residents of hard, bluish stone used for making wood shaping tools'): probably abandoned as a winter village by 1925, most likely due in part to the 1924 establishment of a school at Nash Harbor (i.e., *Qimugglugpagmiut*). It contains 7 houses (with 1 depression complex) and has also been used in spring and summer in connection with seal/walrus hunting and clam digging. Sporadic, general use of the site area occurred as recently as 1986.

People who wintered at *Miqsarmiut* usually went to either *Iqugmiut* or *Tacirrarmiut* for spring sealing, marine mammal hunting and cod fishing, and to *Tacirrlag* area sites for summer salmon fishing. Some of them went cliff-hanging for puffins and murres in the summer, going anywhere between *Iq'ug* (Cape Mohican) and *Carevner*. They often used Nash Harbor for seal netting in the fall, and hunted caribou around *Siimal'eg*.

28) *Ellikarrmiut* ('village/residents of the whetstone' [name often also applies to *Qimugglugpagmiut* ('village/residents of the big bad dog')]; var. Nash Harbor, *Naassaapelarmiut*): a large site containing 46 houses (with 3 depression complexes), it was abandoned as a winter village between ca. 1890-1900 as the result of an

epidemic. Survivors moved (west) across the river/lagoon to *Qimugglugpagmiut*, which became their new winter village. It was also a major camping area associated with fall seal hunting activities. The following population figures all pertain to *Qimugglugpagmiut*: it contained 22 residents [in 6 households] in August 1920 (US Census 1920); 33 in June 1927 (Collins 1927:18-19); 41 [in 9 households] in October 1929 (US Census 1930); 34-38 [in 5 households] in March 1940 (Lantis 1946:162, 317; BIA Census 1940); and 49 in 1950 (Orth 1967:675). The village was abandoned in ca. 1957 due to population centralization at *Mikuryarmiut* (cf. Griffin 2004). Continuing summer/fall use of the site occurs in connection with reindeer herding activities.

During occupations of *Ellikarrmiut/Qimugglugpagmiut* as winter villages, Nash Harbor people used *Tacirarrmiut*, *Talungmiut* and *Cingigarmiut* for spring sealing, marine mammal hunting and cod fishing. Some people also went to *Miqsarmiut* in late spring or early summer for sealing and gathering clams. *Miqsarmiut* was used by Nash Harbor people for fall seal netting (Lantis 1946:181 [note 21]), as well; they netted seals at *Aqitur* in both spring and fall. Summer fish camps known to have been used by Nash Harbor residents included *Qayigyalegmiut*, *Talungmiut*, *Atengmiut*, *Tacirraugarmiut*, *Piimayug*, *Quugarmiut*, and *Negermiut*. Summer and fall cliff-hanging for murres and puffins took place around *Iq'ug*, usually from camps at *Iqugmiut*; however, the people also had use rights to cliff formations on the west coast from *Carevner* northward. During these same seasons, others sometimes netted

cormorants from a base camp at *Qikumiut* (Griffin 2004:155). The area from *Siimal'eg* east to *Qiurtul'i* was where Nash Harbor people normally hunted caribou.

29) *Negermiut* ('village/residents of the west'): reportedly a large winter settlement until struck by "the big epidemic" (i.e., the 1899-1900 epidemic of measles and influenza), this site probably remained in use as a winter village through ca. 1925 (see Lantis 1960:71, 140-142) but construction of the Nash Harbor school led to its abandonment by 1930 (US BIA 1995(3):145-147). It contains the remains of 31 houses (with 4 depression complexes). The site was home to 33 people [in 7 households] in August 1920 (US Census 1920). It has also been occupied as a summer fish camp, and was used as such by two families in 2006 (Drozda 2009: Appendix G).

Former winter residents of *Negermiut* probably used *Cingigarmiut* for spring sealing, marine mammal hunting and cod fishing; they went to Nash Harbor and/or *Aqitur* to net seals in the fall. They likely went inland to the vicinity of *Ingrilukat Nasqurr'at* for caribou hunting in summer and fall.

30) *Kangiremiut* ('village/residents of an estuary'): principally a summer fish camp, this site was reportedly occupied as a winter village on a few occasions after 1900 (US BIA 1995(3):160-163). Twenty houses (with two depression complexes) were recorded here in 1986. The village contained 7 residents in June 1880 (Hooper

1881:5), and 8 [in 3 households] in August-September 1910 (US Bureau of the Census 1910). Seasonal camps used by winter residents of *Kangiremiut* are unknown.

31) *Igwaryarermiut* ('village/residents of the place to come into view'): *Nuniwarmiut* elders speculated this may have been a small winter village before 1900, and said it definitely used to be occupied as a spring seal hunting camp (US BIA 1995(3):192-193). The site contains three houses and probably has not been used since ca. 1920. Nothing is known about seasonal movements of its (presumed) past winter occupants.

32) *Cugg'egmiut* ('village/residents Cugg'eg [beak, snout or lips]'): *Nuniwarmiut* oral accounts suggest occupations of this site as a winter village occurred prior to 1900, but it has mainly been used as a spring and fall sealing camp (Lantis 1946:154, 162 ["Akitok"]; US BIA 1995(3):316-318). Dolly Varden were also caught here in the fall. This is probably the site reported as "Kahmiut" with a population of 40 in July-August 1891 (Petroff 1892; US Census Office 1893:115; cf. Pratt 1997:21-25). Thirteen houses (with one depression complex) were recorded at *Cugg'egmiut* in 1986. There is no information describing seasonal movements of people who may formerly have wintered at this site.

The above listing of former *Nuniwarmiut* winter villages is the most comprehensive possible at this time; however, further processing and analysis of existing oral history

accounts may reveal additional sites that were also historically occupied as winter villages.

Finally, every year there were occasions that brought residents of different sites together at discrete locations; such occurrences were not restricted to one season of the year, so the sites in question were not just winter villages. These gatherings mainly took place in connection with goose hunting, cliff-hanging, sealing and caribou hunting; but they were also generated by messenger feasts. Each of these stimuli is discussed below.

**Co-Utilization of Sites**

The procurement of certain subsistence resources were consistently described in the context of co-utilization by people from multiple settlements; however, use rights to the associated harvest sites were not consistently unrestricted. The few lakes and marshes that normally attracted large congregations of geese during the molt, for instance, were not specifically affiliated with the residents of particular villages. People from across the island could hunt molting geese at those locations without concerns that doing so might be perceived as usurping the rights of others. This was no doubt facilitated by the lack of dwellings or discrete campsites at such locales. In contrast, although migratory seabirds also were not present in all parts of the island use rights to sections of the various cliff formations at which they nested were (prior

to 1900) apportioned to the residents of specific villages. Based on oral accounts of *Nuniwarmiut* elders, Pratt (1990) delineated some of these use areas as follows:

> The people of *Talungmiut* and residents of other villages to the south had exclusive use of the cliffs extending from *Talungmiut* northward to the middle of *Carevner*. From the middle of *Carevner* north to *Tacirarrmiut* the cliffs were primarily used by the *Tacirarrmiut* people, but also by residents of north coast villages such as *Ellikarrmiut* (USGS Nash Harbor) and *Miqsarmiut* (USGS Miksagamiut). Other cliff formations along the west and northwest coasts were similarly partitioned (Pratt 1990:79 [cf. Fig. 1, p. 81]).

With respect to the above cliffs, the birds sought were principally murres and horned or tufted puffins, and they were harvested by cliff-hanging. Cormorants—another species of migratory seabird—were also commonly hunted on Nunivak. These birds nest on low cliffs or bluffs and could be efficiently harvested without the need for cliff-hanging; the areas at which they were hunted were not restricted. Thus, elders reported that men from throughout the island used to go to *Penacuarmiut* for cormorant hunting (Kolerok and Kolerok 1986, 1991d).

Lantis (1946:17) stated that seals were the most important subsistence animals to the *Nuniwarmiut* (cf. Griffin 2004:139), with bearded seals being the most valuable species. But no restrictions of use were tied to major seal hunting sites/areas on the

island. The sites of *Englullrarmiut* (on the northeast coast), *Ciguralegmiut* (on the south coast) and *Tacirrarmiut* (on the west coast) were the most productive bases for spring sealing; and the evidence indicates they were annually used by residents of multiple villages. Where a person or family went for spring sealing was primarily determined by considerations of geographic proximity, not by territorial restrictions of some sort. Seals were available throughout the island's coastline in spring, though they were more numerous in some areas than others. Their relative abundance no doubt contributed to the absence of restrictions on site use for this activity. But different circumstances existed with respect to fall sealing, which reportedly was limited to parts of the north coast—with Nash Harbor described as the most heavily used area for seal netting in that season. In spite of the reduced number of locales at which fall sealing occurred there is no evidence those sites were considered off-limits to anyone. The large distances people from Nunivak's east and southeast coasts would have had to travel to reach fall seal netting sites, however, makes it likely that most would simply have bartered with residents of north or west coast settlements for products of those hunts (cf. Griffin 2004:165).

Though the data are less definitive, 'territorial' restrictions similar to those documented for cliff-hanging also appear to have applied to caribou hunting—especially relative to the use of *Entul'i*, *Qiurtul'i* and *Siimal'eg* (see Pratt 2001:36-37). Physical evidence and oral testimony from *Nuniwarmiut* elders indicate those three hills were extremely important caribou hunting areas; they may also have been

calving grounds (Pratt 2001:37). Oral accounts report that *Entul'i* was used primarily by people from *Carwarmiut* southward, including *Cingigglag* [Cape Mendenhall] and *Tacirrlag* [Duchikthluk Bay]. *Entul'i* was also considered the western boundary of the caribou hunting area for people along the southern coast from *Nunarrlugarmiut* to at least *Tevcarmiut Uaqlit*. In contrast, *Qiurtul'i* and *Siimal'eg* were used by people from the west coast villages of *Tacirarrmiut*, *Talungmiut*, *Qayigyalegmiut*, *Ellikarrmiut* and *Miqsarmiut*.

*Ingrilukat Nasqurr'at* (located in the central interior of Nunivak) was possibly the southern boundary of caribou hunting grounds commonly used by residents of north coast villages such as *Mikuryarmiut* and *Kangiremiut*. "Caribou hunting areas used by residents along Nunivak's east and southeast coasts (e.g., *Am'igtulirmiut*, *Ingrimiut*, *Paamiut*) were not specified; however, *Ingrilukat Nasqurr'at* and sites from *Ing'errlag* [Mt. Roberts] eastward were probably all available to these people" (Pratt 2001:37).

**Messenger Feasts**

The only major ceremonial event that always involved people from multiple villages was the messenger feast; other ceremonies were either intra-village or family-based in nature (Lantis 1946:195-197). Messenger feasts were prestige- or status-oriented affairs in which one village hosted people from another village, distributing various gifts to them as part of the event. These feasts were often initiated by a "wealthy

man" from the host village, who dispatched messengers to notify the selected participant village (see Lantis 1946:188-192; 1960:9-12). Though the decision to hold such a feast might be made by one man, sending out the messengers effectively imposed an economic obligation on his entire village, with all residents who could afford to do so contributing gifts for the invited attendees. But the messenger feast also created an obligation on the part of the invited village to reciprocate at some point in the future. Their high economic costs meant most villages could not afford to host a messenger feast more than about once every three years (Lantis 1946:188 [note 61]). These feasts could occur at any season of the year, whenever a person or village felt sufficiently 'rich' to support the event; occasionally they also involved people from the mainland.[55] Messenger feasts are documented between the Nunivak villages/areas listed below, with the host village and season of occurrence specified when known.

-*Ellikarrmiut* (host) and *Qayigyalegmiut* = fall (Lantis 1960:6).

-*Mikuryarmiut* (host) and *Ellikarrmiut*, plus people from "the southside" = fall/early winter (Lantis 1960:10).

-"Cape Mendenhall" (host) and *Ellikarrmiut* (Lantis 1960:31).

-*Itegmiut* (host) and *Qavlumiut* = winter (Lantis 1960:36).

[55] For instance, after a surprisingly large harvest of beluga whales one spring/early summer the village of *Ciguralegmiut* hosted a messenger feast for people from Nelson Island (Lantis 1960:16).

-*Qaneryagtalegmiut* (host) and *Kangirrlagmiut*, *Mikuryarmiut* = winter (Lantis 1960:71).

-*Itegmiut* (host) and *Mikuryarmiut* = apparently winter (Lantis 1960:49-50).

-*Cuqucuryarmiut* (host) and *Mikuryarmiut* = apparently winter (Lantis 1960:92).

-*Itegmiut* (host) and *Kangirrlagmiut* (Lantis 1960:71).

-*Penacuarmiut* and *Qengartaaremiut* had messenger feasts with one another (Noatak 1986b), probably in fall.

-*Carwarmiut* and *Qayigyalegmiut* had messenger feasts with one another prior to 1900 (Noatak 1986d), most likely in summer.

-*Ciguralegmiut* (host) and *Nuuteqermiut*, spring, ca. 1920 (Drozda 2009:96).

-*Qaneryagtalegmiut* occasionally hosted messenger feasts and "invited the whole island" (Lantis 1960:149 [#10]).

Collectively, this short record of messenger feasts suggests that people from all parts of the island had some degree of interaction with each other.[56] Lantis (1946:188-192) did not describe any social regulatory functions in connection with *Nuniwarmiut* messenger feasts, but they were apparently integral to messenger feasts involving other Central Yup'ik populations (e.g., Andrews 1994:84-85; Morrow 1984:131-135; Shinkwin and Pete 1984:105-106). If such functions were also applicable to *Nuniwarmiut* messenger feasts then the record of these events just given may hold

[56] At least one multi-village "exchange feast" (Lantis 1946:187-188) is also documented, with *Negermiut* hosting "Nash Harbor" (Lantis 1960:72).

important clues about the types of social relationships that existed between the participating villages/groups.

## Connecting Kin to Place

One objective of this study was to track historical site usage by *Nuniwarmiut* individuals and families from about 1880-1960 in a way that could connect them to specific winter villages and seasonal camps across the island. This task relied primarily on *Nuniwarmiut* residence histories compiled by the author, but it was well-supplemented by various other ethnographic and genealogical research data (e.g., Drozda 2009; Lantis 1960; US BIA 1995), and available census records. Information linking named people to named sites on Nunivak was assembled, analyzed, cross-referenced and tabulated. In addition to illustrating the central role of kinship in *Nuniwarmiut* settlement and land use patterns through time, the results are used to satisfy two objectives: (1) explore patterns of post-marital residence to confirm that matrilocality was the norm, and determine if the reported 'patrilineal bias' of the kinship system (Lantis 1946:239-246; 1984:216-219) was at all visible in long-term residence choices; and (2) assess the validity of Lantis' (1946:257) claim that there was a "lack of attachment to specific locality" among these people.

The biographical sketches of (17) individuals and impressive genealogies compiled by Lantis (1960) were critically important to this effort. Although the genealogies do not contain data about family residence, most biographies identify residents of

particular sites at certain periods in the subject individuals' lives. The site names reported by Lantis were correlated with known *Nuniwarmiut* sites, with the individuals referenced to each site identified via tedious reviews of her genealogies (in which 428 separate individuals are represented, each of whom was assigned a discrete genealogical number). Lantis used fictional English names for the people about whom she published biographical data; but her genealogies employ a mixture of fictional English names, Native names or nicknames, and technonyms (for young children at the time of her work). Linking real people with their fictional English names was easy because Lantis graciously provided me with her key; however, the task of confidently identifying who is who based on Native names/nicknames or technonyms is considerably more difficult. At least four factors complicated this process: i.e., any given Native name might apply to multiple individuals listed in the genealogies; Native names could not be obtained for numerous individuals who lived prior to 1900; adoption was widespread; and a large percentage of people had multiple marriages in their lifetimes.[57]

Because they included Native names and estimated ages of the individuals enumerated, the US Census records for 1920 and 1930 were also useful in connecting individuals and families to specific sites; but some of the same factors mentioned above complicated the process of confidently identifying certain individuals.

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[57] Marriage determinations for a given individual are based on *Nuniwarmiut* oral history accounts (e.g., Lantis 1960) and, to a lesser degree, census records. It is possible that some marriages (particularly if short-lived) were not documented.

The Nunivak census data for 1939-1940 derive from Lantis (1946), T. Dale Stewart (US BIA 1940) and Amos Burg (1941). Lantis provided population counts for a number of camps and villages, but only in three cases did she identify the resident individuals by name (i.e., Lantis 1946:317). Stewart's census was more detailed and specifically named each person enumerated; however, it incorrectly implied the entire Nunivak population resided at *Mikuryarmiut*. The information Burg presented was evidently based on Stewart's work, but Burg corrected its central flaw by breaking the island population down by settlement. Finally, English names that had been recently assigned to individuals (by government teachers and missionaries) were provided by both Stewart and Burg. For all of these reasons, the 1939-1940 census data of Lantis, Stewart and Burg are most useful in combination with one another.

The last and most complete census for the study period was taken by Lantis in 1958, by which time *Mikuryarmiut* was the only occupied village on the island. In that census, all enumerated individuals were identified with English names.

## Individual Residence Histories

The different sites at which individuals lived over the course of their lifetimes were determined through a variety of factors. Decisions about residence and use of resources involved social, economic and ecological considerations; issues of personal competence and even temperament could also be important. Resource availability

obviously was critical in such decisions but kinship may have been the most compelling factor. Children presumably had little control over the issue, simply going where their parents took them; but adults generally used the same sites their parents and grandparents before them had used. Also, and for men in particular, marriage tended to add new constellations of possible residence sites to individual orbits. Conversely, the ability to travel long distances for or effectively contribute to a broad range of seasonal subsistence activities decreased as a person aged, so elderly people tended to stay in or close to their winter villages throughout the year (e.g., Lantis 1946:177). The mobility of disabled people was often similarly limited (cf. Lantis 1946:164).

Subsistence resource failures (e.g., disappearance of cod), epidemic diseases, and weather-related natural phenomena (e.g., flooding, severe erosion) were factors beyond human control that could alter a person's normal annual pattern of site use. Other factors that could influence these patterns included various cultural, economic and technological changes. Introduction of the Western educational system, for example, precipitated a number of major changes that greatly altered customary land use and settlement patterns on Nunivak. In most instances, however, it has not been possible to determine the specific motivations for individual or family movements from one place or another.

For numerous reasons, the summary accounts provided below cannot be considered complete records of the subject individuals' residence histories. Interviews conducted by the author specifically to record residence histories clearly failed to capture the full story of any individual's residence history: i.e., census records and accounts obtained from other *Nuniwarmiut* have supplemented virtually every one of those interviews. Thus, some instances of individual site use/residence had been forgotten, or perhaps were not considered significant enough to mention. Neither case would be surprising given the high degree of mobility expressed in the overall body of assembled data. Additionally, the age of interviewees when at given places may have influenced their recollections of sites and the specific subsistence activities with which they were associated. The gender of an interviewee could have factored into such recollections as well. Finally, it should also be understood that residence was not a central concern of Lantis during her research on *Nuniwarmiut* genealogies and biographies, so residence data contained in that work is a bonus.

In any given residence history, when dates are presented in brackets following a named site it indicates the individual was definitely at that place during the year(s) noted; it does *not* mean that was the only time the person used that place. Specific resources or subsistence activities mentioned in connection with use of a particular site are similarly presented in brackets; but this is not meant to imply that those were the *only* resources harvested or activities undertaken at the site.

**Amos Smelling** (*Naryartur*, ca. 1869-1951): his father was *Cuukar* and his mother *Angawin*. Born at *Tacirrarmiut*, he was the eldest person on Nunivak when Lantis began her fieldwork in 1939; the following information about his residence history derives from his biographical account (Lantis 1960:3-26). The sites listed below are those where he is known to have lived or camped over the course of his life.

Winter villages: *Narulkirnarmiut* (throughout childhood), *Miqsarmiut*, *Mikuryarmiut* (when his children were born and in his later years), and *Qaneryagtalegmiut*.
Spring camps: *Ciguralegmiut* [seals, bearded seal, walrus, beluga], *Tacirrarmiut* [seals, cod], and *Kangirrlagmiut* [seals].
Summer camps: *Carwarmiut* [cliff-hanging (birds and eggs), trout[58]].
Fall camps: Nash Harbor [sealing], *Carwarmiut* [trout, cliff-hanging (puffins and other cliff-dwelling birds)], and *Qayigyalegmiut* [trout].
Winter camps: Nash Harbor/*Urasqaaremiut* [seals].

His family also used *Mecagmiut*, *Amyag*, and *Cingiggarrlugar* but the nature of their use of these sites was not specified. He married his first wife in ca. 1890: she was apparently living/camping at *Mecagmiut* at the time, but he took her to his home village of *Tacirrarmiut*. He ultimately had a total of six marriages.

[58] "Trout" may refer to either Dolly Varden or arctic char (cf. Drozda 2009:106).

**Andrew Noatak** (*Nuratar* [ca. 1900-1994], named after a paternal uncle—but also the name of his father's grandfather)[59]: his father *Cikigar* was born at *Ellikarrmiut*; his mother *Nevviayagar* was born at *Narulkirnarmiut*. Andrew was also born at *Narulkirnarmiut*, which implies the rule of matrilocal residence after marriage was adhered to by his father. The seasonal round Andrew participated in while growing up and traveling with his parents is summarized below.

Winter villages: *Narulkinarmiut*; *Itegmiut*; *Talungmiut*, *Ellikarrmiut*, *Ingrimiut*.
Spring camps: *Talungmiut* [bearded seal, murres, cliff vegetation (*inguqit*), cow parsnip, mountain sorrel], *Tacirrarmiut* [sealing, cliff-hanging (birds and eggs)], *Ciguralegmiut* [seal, walrus, cod, halibut, herring]; *Qikertarrlag* (jigging for cod).
Summer camps: *Iqangmiut* [chum salmon], *Tacirmiut*, *Kangirtulirmiut*, *Nunangnerrmiut*, *Carwarmiut* [cod, silver salmon, jigging for Dolly Varden], *Talungmiut* [Pacific cod, chum salmon], *Qayigyalegmiut* [Dolly Varden], *Nunarllugarmiut*, *Iwerwigmiut* [before 1910], *Cuqucuryarmiut* [before 1920], *Kuigaaremiut*, *Quugarmiut*, *Tacirraugarmiut* [one time only].
Fall camps: *Carwarmiut*, *Qayigyalegmiut* [fox, Dolly Varden]; *Talungmiut* [cliff-hanging]; *Iquarmiut* [fox, seals]; *Penacuarmiut* [Dolly Varden?]; *Naassaapelarmiut*

[59] As a young man he once became "embarrassed" of his given name and thereafter had the name *An'ngaluq*; but he eventually reverted back to *Nuratar* and was known by that name throughout his adult life. The English name "Andrew" was conferred on him by "a whiteman named *Miisar* [Misha Ivanoff?] when he [Andrew] made a credit purchase at Tununak" (Noatak 1990:7).

(Nash Harbor [ringed seal]), *Cugg'egmiut* [seal netting], *Narulkirnarmiut* [netting for baby bearded seal].

Andrew also accompanied his parents on occasional trips to Norton Sound (which *Nuniwarmiut* generally refer to as *Tacir* ["bay"]), but the purpose of those trips was not specified.

At the time of his first marriage (ca. 1923) Andrew moved to *Itegmiut*, the home of his wife's family, and then to their summer fish camp at *Ucingurmiut*. The short-lived marriage was never consummated; it ended with Andrew's departure to *Talungmiut* later that same summer (cf. Lantis 1960:37). His second marriage, to *Arnaracungar* [Ruth], occurred sometime after 1924; how this marriage might have influenced his pattern of residence is uncertain, because the home village of his wife and seasonal camps of her family have not been determined. Andrew's father died sometime before his sister *Panigkar* [born ca. 1914] had married, and the absence of other males in the household left Andrew responsible for filling the economic shoes of his father. If this situation existed at the time of Andrew's second marriage then he and his new wife probably lived with his mother. In any case, after Andrew began traveling on his own his seasonal round included use of the sites listed below.

Winter villages: *Tacirrarmiut* [1939], *Qayigyalegmiut* [1920]; *Itegmiut* [ca. 1923]; *Ciguralegmiut* [1930]; *Talungmiut* [through at least 1940]; *Mikuryarmiut* [sometime after 1940].

Winter camp: *Iquarmiut* [fox].

Spring camps: *Ciguralegmiut* [sealing]; *Talungmiut* [cliff-hanging]; *Cingigarmiut* [overnight camp associated with sealing (one time only)]; *Englullrarmiut* [after ca. 1960].

Summer camps: *Talungmiut* [chum salmon, cliff-hanging]; *Ucingurmiut* [ca. 1922], *Carwarmiut* and *Quugarmiut* [after ca. 1940 (fishing)]; Mekoryuk River [after ca. 1960 (fishing)].

Fall camps: *Qayigyalegmiut* and *Carwarmiut* [mainly fishing for Dolly Varden]; *Talungmiut* [cliff-hanging].

Data on Andrew's residence history are largely silent about site connections to his wives' families, thereby suggesting (perhaps incorrectly) that the sites he used after marriage were based largely on his pre-marital residence history.

**Edna Kolerok**[60] (*Arnaracungar*, *Panigacungar*, ca. 1902-1996): her father was *Lurtussikar* and her mother *Patugul'ria*. She was born in spring at the site of *Englullugmiut*. While she was young and unmarried, Edna recalls that her family used the sites listed below.

[60] Surnames reported for women are based on their last/most recent marriage.

Winter villages: *Nunarrlugarmiut*, *Mikuryarmiut* [crowberries], *Negermiut* [cow parsnip, sourdock].

Spring camps: *Englullugmiut*, *Ciguralegmiut* [*arnaut* ("small edible sea creatures" [English name unknown])], *Qikertarrlag* [Arctic tern eggs, Pacific cod].

Summer camps: *Iqangmiut* [Dolly Varden].

Fall camps: *Ellikarrmiut* [seal netting].

While married to her first husband, Moses Whitman (*Nayi'ir* [also known as *Werqal$^{\varepsilon}$ria*]), Edna remembered using the following sites in the seasons specified.

Winter villages: *Carwarmiut*, *Mikuryarmiut*.

Spring camps: *Englullrarmiut* [cod, sealing].

Summer camps: *Iqangmiut* [Dolly Varden, salmon].

Fall camps: *Carwarmiut* [Dolly Varden, geese], *Aqitumiut* [seal netting].

Overnight camps: *Entul'i* and *Ingrilukat Nasqurr'at* [while traveling with Moses from the north coast to the west and south coasts, respectively].

Moses died while they were living at *Mikuryarmiut*: she remained there following his death but moved to her parents' house. Sometime later Edna married Leonard Mathlaw (*Mellaar*) and relocated to *Ellikarrmiut*, which became her winter village. Information about their seasonal round is sketchy; however, it seems most of their

time was spent in the vicinity of Nash Harbor. Leonard was apparently a wealthy man—presumably the result of his success as a seal hunter. This is suggested by Edna's recollections about a number of trading trips she made with Leonard to the Yukon and Kuksokwim rivers. His boat was powered by a "Red Wing" diesel motor, carried a 55-gallon drum of fuel, and was always filled with seal oil pokes during these trips.

Leonard died sometime after 1960, by which time he and Edna had made *Mikuryarmiut* their winter village. After his death she began summer camping at *Tacirmiut* with Daisy and Olie Olrun (and their son Daniel). Edna eventually married for a third time, to Robert Kolerok (*Qungutur* [also known as *Qulirug*]). They lived in *Mikuryarmiut* and used *Iqangmiut* as their summer fish camp, through at least 1986.

**Bernice Hendrickson** (*Caq'ar*, ca. 1910-1950): her father was *Nan'ur* and her mother *Nuss'an*. She was born on Cape Mendenhall, probably at *Ciguralegmiut*.

Winter villages: *Ciguralegmiut* (ca. 1913), *Paamiut* (?), *Qaneryagtalegmiut* (?), *Ucingurmiut*, *Itegmiut*, and *Mikuryarmiut*.
Spring camps: *Englullrarmiut*, *Nuuteqermiut*, *Tacirrarmiut* and *Miqsarmiut* [all for sealing]; possibly *Kangirrlagmiut* and *Talungmiut* as well.

Summer camps: *Qayigyalegmiut*, *Ucingurmiut*, *Nunangnerrmiut* [all for fishing]; *Miqsarmiut* [bearded seals, clams]; and Nash Harbor [1929 (sealing)].

Fall camps: Nash Harbor and *Aqitur* [sealing].

Her first marriage was arranged when she was a young girl (ca. 1923); she was not receptive to the idea so the marriage was never consummated and ended quickly. Her family lived at Nash Harbor [*Qimugglugpagmiut*] when her second marriage occurred, in 1929. Her husband [Kay Hendrickson (*Qaiwigar*, born ca. 1909)] moved there to live with her family.

**Fred Weston** (*Cikulqaar*, born ca. 1914 [named after his grandfather]): his father was *An'irilar* and mother *Nuyaryug*. Fred was born at *Qayigyalegmiut*, his family's fall camp. The following information about his residence history was not presented in terms of pre- and post-marital use patterns.

Winter villages: *Ellikarrmiut*, *Mikuryarmiut*.

Spring camps: *Tacirrarmiut* [red salmon]; *Apaaremiut/Qikertat* [cod]; *Ciguralegmiut*, *Cingigarmiut* and *Miqsarmiut* [all for sealing].

Summer camps: *Carwarmiut*, *Tacirraugarmiut* [pink and chum salmon], *Negermiut*, *Kangiremiut*, *Atengmiut*, *Mecagmiut*.

Fall camps: *Qayigyalegmiut* [salmon, Dolly Varden, sealing]; *Talungmiut* [silver salmon, Dolly Varden].

Fred's first wife was *Arnayagar* [sister of Robert Kolerok]; he said they lived at *Apaaremiut* during their marriage and provided no other residence history information. His second wife was *Carevlan* [Maude (daughter of Wesley Float, and younger sister of Harry Wesley)]. Fred's remark that her family stayed at *Mecagmiut* in both winter and summer suggests he also used the site following this marriage.

**Mildred Whitman** (*Panigkar*, born ca. 1914): her father *Cikigar* was born at *Ellikarrmiut*, and her mother *Nevviayagar* at *Narulkirnarmiut*. Mildred was born at *Talungmiut*, the family's winter village. In her recollection, the sites used by the family when she was young were as follows.

Winter villages: *Talungmiut*.
Spring camps: *Ciguralegmiut* [sealing, cod fishing].
Summer camps: *Kuigaaremiut* [fishing].
Fall camps: *Ellikarrmiut* [seal netting].

Mildred's father died sometime before she was married. The context of her oral account suggests his death occurred by ca. 1925; thereafter, she perceived her brother—Andrew Noatak (*Nuratur*)—to be her "father." The family was apparently living at *Kuigaaremiut* when she married her first husband, Eugene David (*Avegyar*, born ca. 1910); his parents were also living there at the time. The rule of matrilocal

residence must have been a moot point in this case, as both families were occupying the same site and it did not contain more than one *kiiyar* (men's house). The seasonal round Mildred participated in following her marriage is presented below.

Winter villages: *Talungmiut, Mikuryarmiut* [sometime after 1940].

Spring camps: *Talungmiut* [cliff-hanging (?)]; Cape Mendenhall (walrus).

Summer camps: *Tacirmiut* (red, chum or silver salmon), *Kuigaaremiut* and *Tevcarmiut Uaqlit* [fishing]; *Am'igtulirmiut* [after ca. 1950 (fishing)].

Fall camps: *Talungmiut* [cliff-hanging (tufted puffins)]; *Qayigyalegmiut* [Dolly Varden]; *Ellikarrmiut* [seal netting]; *Carwarmiut* (trout).

Winter camp: *Ellikarrmiut* (fox).

Mildred's first husband died sometime after 1960, and she eventually remarried. Her second husband was Ben Whitman (*Kangleg*, born ca. 1913). During this marriage her seasonal round was as follows.

Winter village: *Mikuryarmiut.*

Spring camp: *Englullrarmiut* [sealing].

Summer camp: fishing, but site(s) not specified.

Fall camp: *Aqitur* [seal netting].

**Walter Amos** (*Tutqir*, ca. 1920-2001): his father *Naryartur* was born at *Tacirrarmiut*[61] (Lantis 1960:5 [number 5]); the birthplace of his mother *Panigkuin* is unknown. Walter was born at *Taprarmiut* and raised at the nearby village of *Qavlumiut* (Howard Amos, personal communication [April 1989]; Amos and Amos 1986). The seasonal round he participated in while living with his parents was as follows.

Winter villages: *Miqsarmiut*, *Qaneryagtalegmiut* [1930], *Qavlumiut* [1940], and *Mikuryarmiut* [after 1940].

Spring camps: *Iqugmiut* and *Englullrarmiut* [sealing].

Summer camps: *Taprarmiut*, *Tuqsuq* (lagoon) [red salmon].

Fall camps: *Unguliwigamiut* [1920] and *Ellikarrmiut* [presumably for sealing].

Walter married his wife Nona (*Nuyalran*, 1926-2003) in ca. 1940 and moved to her family's home at *Mikuryarmiut*. This was the first and only marriage for both individuals. Walter's seasonal round thereafter was as presented below.

Winter village: *Mikuryarmiut*.

Summer camps: *Nunarrlugarmiut* [Nona's birthplace], occasionally *Iqangmiut*, and the *Taciqvag* area (one time only) [both for fishing].

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[61] Several of Amos' descendants have reported his birthplace as *Miqsarmiut*.

Fall camps: *Ellikarrmiut* [crowberries, pink salmon (when available)]; *Ingrimiut* and *Qaneryagtalegmiut* [after ca. 1975 (berry picking)].

Throughout their long life together, Walter and Nona spent their winters at *Mikuryarmiut* and summer camped almost exclusively at *Nunarrlugarmiut*: both sites were closely affiliated with Nona's family.

**Richard Davis** (*Tekrilᵏngur* (also known as *Qayarkilᵏgur*) [1928-2007]): his father was *Atakuilᵏngur* (also called *Kavviarkilᵏngur* [Davis]) and his mother *Apurin*. He was born at *Tacirmiut*. His father died when Richard was young; his maternal cousin ["step-brother" in Richard's usage] *Kalirmiu* (Peter Smith) was living with the family at the time (cf. Lantis 1960:52), and he became the equivalent of an uncle to Richard. As seen below, Richard recounted his residence history in a chronologically ordered fashion.

(Birth to age 12 [1928-1940])

Winter villages: *Qengartaaremiut*, *Mikuryarmiut* [as early as 1930].

Spring camps: *Cingigmiut*, *Ciguralegmiut*.

Summer camps: *Tacirmiut*, *Qanitarmiut*.

(Age 12 to 18 [1940-1946])

Winter villages: *Mikuryarmiut*.

Spring camps: *Ciguralegmiut.*

Summer camps: *Qengartaaremiut, Tacirmiut.*

Fall camps: *Qengartaaremiut.*

Winter camps: *Talungmiut, Qengartaaremiut, Cuqucuryarmiut, Qaneryagtalegmiut.*

(Age 18 and beyond [ca. 1946 through at least 1990])

Winter village: *Mikuryarmiut*; possibly *Cingigmiut* for some period of time after his marriage.

Spring camps: *Cingigmiut, Englullugmiut* [cod, possibly only in 1986].

Summer camps: *Qengartaaremiut, Tacirmiut*, Mekoryuk River.

Fall camps: *Kangirtulirmiut* (normally) [silver salmon], sometimes *Kuiggaremiut* or *Tacirmiut.*

Richard married Irene [*Mik'ngay'ar* (daughter of Don Spud)] ca. 1946-1950; this was his first and only marriage. The winter and summer home of Irene's family was *Cingigmiut.* The couple lived at *Cingigmiut* for an unknown span of time after marriage but regularly used *Tacirmiut* (Richard's home village) as their summer camp.

**Summary of Findings**

Based on documented post-marital site residence patterns, the evidence strongly supports the claim that "matrilocal residence was the rule" among the *Nuniwarmiut*

(Lantis 1946:161)—as long as the claim is restricted to the occasion of a man's *first* marriage. In those cases, there is an obvious pattern of the new husband relocating to the residence site of his wife's family. Collectively, the residence histories just described include solid data about this subject for eight marriages and six (or 75%) of them were matrilocal. One of the exceptions to this rule concerns a man whose first marriage occurred in ca. 1890: although his bride-to-be was living at *Mecagmiut* he reportedly took her to *Tacirrarmiut* (his own home village) immediately after being married. There may have been mitigating circumstances that justified this deviation from the norm, but none are revealed in the available data. A second case I am treating as an exception involved a man and woman whose families lived in the same settlement at the time of marriage. The event obviously did not require a residence site change; and because that particular settlement contained only one *kiiyar* (the building in which the men slept), the newly-married man's *kiiyar* affiliation also did not change.

There is little doubt that the matrilocal 'rule' among the *Nuniwarmiut* contained some flexibility. Thus, if a young man about to be married was the only male member of a household he probably would not have been expected to relocate to the residential site of his bride's family—as doing so would likely have imposed too much hardship on his own family. The matrilocal residence pattern clearly did not necessarily apply to subsequent marriages a man might have; it also was not always applicable in the case of marriages involving middle-aged or older spouses. Thus, after the death of his first

wife Leonard Mathlaw married a widow (Edna Moses [this was also her second marriage]) who lived in *Mikuryarmiut* and brought her and her two adopted daughters to his home at Nash Harbor—where Leonard was evidently the "chief" (Margaret Lantis, personal communication). In contrast, the matrilocal residence pattern would appear to have been invoked when John Jones married his second wife Lily (in ca. 1943) and moved to her home village of *Mikuryarmiut*. But this case was more complicated than it seems. John had been living at Nash Harbor for five or more years with his first wife when she and the couple's two daughters died suddenly of measles in 1942; this tragedy may have factored into his decision to move away from Nash Harbor. Additionally, Lily's marriage to John was her fifth, she had already borne eight children and was 15 years older than her new husband (Lantis 1960:74); these considerations probably also influenced where the couple chose to live.

Finally, the evidence is insufficient to determine whether the matrilocal residence rule on Nunivak amounted to an expectation that a man would provide services/assistance to his wife's parents for some period of time after marriage. But even if that was the case, multiple examples exist where a newly-married man relocated to the residence site of his wife's family and continued to use that site (usually on an annual basis) throughout the life of the marriage, even if it lasted for decades.

Table 3: Individual Residence History Details

| Name | Marriages[62] | Residence Sites Prior to Marriage | Additional, Post-Marital Residence Sites | Total Residence Sites |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Amos Smelling | 6 | ? | ? | 14 |
| Andrew Noatak | 3 | 24 | 4 | 28 |
| Edna Kolerok | 3 | 8 | 6 | 14 |
| Bernice Hendrickson | 2 | 17 | 0 | 17 |
| Fred Weston | 2 | ? | ? | 15 |
| Mildred Whitman | 2 | 4 | 8 | 12 |
| Walter Amos | 1 | 10 | 4 | 14 |
| Richard Davis | 1 | 9 | 3 | 12 |

I initially expected the *Nuniwarmiut* residence history data to show that the number of sites an individual used during his or her lifetime (see Table 3) increased in direct proportion with the number of times that person had been married—this seemed particularly likely for men. That is, individuals who only married once or twice and enjoyed long-lasting marriages were expected to have a smaller number of sites represented in their residence histories than people who had married three or more times. Selectively reviewing the residence histories of Richard Davis, Mildred

[62] The number of marriages reported for Andrew Noatak and Bernice Hendrickson must be qualified: i.e., it may be inaccurate to count their first "marriages" as such because Lantis (1960) indicates they were never consummated.

Whitman and Andrew Noatak would suggest the anticipated results were confirmed. But that was not the case, as indicated most clearly by the residence history of Amos Smelling: i.e., he had more marriages than any of the other seven individuals listed in Table 3 yet only exceeded two of them in number of residence sites.[63]

Another interesting point is revealed by comparing the residence history data of Andrew Noatak and Bernice Hendrickson. Andrew lived to an estimated age of 94 whereas Bernice died at age 40 (Lantis 1960:160), yet they had the two highest counts of total documented residence sites (28 and 17, respectively). Despite the small sample size, this suggests the total number of residence sites used by a person was not necessarily correlated with his/her lifespan. Although it was customary for men to go "from camp to camp, traveling light and without their wives" (Lantis 1946:178), Bernice's data also indicate some women traveled extensively across the island.

Overall, great variability was documented with respect to the number of residence sites different individuals used over the course of their lifetimes; and there is no single or obvious explanation for that variability. It may be that certain individuals (and couples) simply liked experimenting with different sites, traveling, and being out on the land more than others. Understanding how "partnerships" (see Lantis

[63] Residence histories presented in Table 3 are inclusive of all efforts to determine these individuals' past residences (e.g., interviews, biographical accounts, analysis of census records).

1946:243-244) influenced historic *Nuniwarmiut* land use practices would probably illuminate some aspects of this variability, but that is not possible today. Lantis offered the following comments on this general issue:

> I found Nunivakers explaining many relational acts in terms of partnership obligations and opportunities. One had to know not only who was related to whom but also who were partners of the different types. A man and his partner would set a sealnet. I should have got more information on how they decided where and when to set it. Perhaps it depended on seniority, experience, and personality, or who had a right to the best place (Margaret Lantis, personal communication [9/16/88]).

A final observation should be made relative to the documented variability. Some people specifically interviewed about their residence histories evidently did not understand that I was seeking the most comprehensive accounting of their past residence sites as possible. They instead seem to have named the main sites they used in different seasons of the year, or those to which they felt the strongest connections. This problem reduces the comparative value of the residence history interviews as a whole; but the extensive oral history data compiled by BIA researchers from 1986-1991 allowed residence histories of some individuals to be expanded beyond the content of their own testimony. That is, virtually every BIA interview (regardless of its topic of focus) yielded information about individuals and families that formerly

used certain sites. Efforts were made to extract and utilize any such information found concerning individuals whose residence histories are discussed herein.

Another point of interest concerning residence histories involves post-1920 reindeer herding activities on Nunivak. Although a number of the men with whom residence history interviews were conducted had formerly worked as reindeer herders none of them mentioned having used old caribou hunting sites in the interior while engaged in that activity. Yet, interviews about caribou hunting and interior land use on the island yielded multiple accounts from former reindeer herders describing re-use of stone shelters that had been built by their ancestors at important caribou hunting sites such as *Entul'i* and *Qiurtul'i* (cf. Pratt 2001:33). The sites were evidently used solely as overnight camps by reindeer herders, not as resource harvesting sites; this may have precluded such places from being conceived of as "residence" sites. In a discussion of her residence history, however, one elderly woman [Kolerok 1991] named several former caribou hunting sites at which she had stayed overnight (sleeping in existing stone shelters) while traveling through the island's interior. Thus, overnight stays at such places were more significant or memorable to some individuals than to others—thereby illustrating another aspect of variability in *Nuniwarmiut* residence history data.

Attempts to connect specific family groups based on patrilineal descent and affinity to specific places of residence through multiple generations were largely unsuccessful:

the data are simply inadequate for the task. Most of the older individuals listed in Lantis' genealogies cannot be linked to specific residence sites at all, and for others this can only be done at one or two points in time. Another major problem is that population centralization and culture change during the final three generations of the study period (i.e., 1920-1960) caused a significant contraction of *Nuniwarmiut* land use and residence patterns. In fact, the vast majority of *Nuniwarmiut* men and women born after ca. 1940 really had no opportunity to develop a sense of "father's village" vs. "mother's village"—because only a few winter villages remained in use by that date. One type of patrilineal linkage that can sometimes be made with the available data is presented below.

Generation 1: Amos Smelling (or "Amos" [*Naryartur*]) formerly wintered at *Miqsarmiut.*

Generation 2: Walter Amos (*Tutqir*), a son of Amos, formerly wintered at *Miqsarmiut.*

Generation 3: Howard Amos (*Nakaar*), a son of Walter Amos, reported that his father was told by his own father [Amos] that *Miqsarmiut* "belonged to his family lineage, and that no one should ever take it away from them" (Howard Amos, personal communication [19 October 2008]).

This example is not very useful in demonstrating that men regularly used the same sites their male ancestors had used before them, because it is not possible to

determine the actual extent of use of *Miqsarmiut*, generation-to-generation. It does, however, indicate that family groups felt enduring associations with specific sites (cf. Lantis 1946:239 [note 156]); and this is to be expected, despite the matrilocal residence pattern, since boys were raised chiefly by their fathers (Lantis 1960:60 [note 11]). That is, fathers instructed their sons about life on the land by drawing from personal experiences, many of which would have been geographically associated with their family groups. But it is also worth noting that although Amos Smelling was born at *Tacirrarmiut* that site was not identified in the residence history of his son Walter.

That women also developed strong associations with certain sites is exemplified in the following remarks by Kay Hendrickson and his wife Mattie Hendrickson about the site of *Kuigaaremiut*:

> Kay: I used to stay [at *Kuigaaremiut*] when I was a young boy...my father used to live there.
>
> Mattie: We [she and Kay] married in 1950, and after we married, we went to fish camp, right there [*Kuigaaremiut*]...I know my grandma [camped] there, too.
>
> Kay: [Mattie's] grandmother's mother's grandmother [also lived there] (Drozda 1994:60-62).

Concerning the *Nuniwarmiut*, a previous researcher concluded that: "With population decline, the traditionally dispersed and seasonally mobile populations became more stable. Since fish and game resources were never seriously depleted even after firearms came to be widely used, the population that remained, though concentrated in fewer villages, was better equipped to pursue available resources" (VanStone 1989:40). The data consulted in the present study do not support that conclusion in several ways.

First, caribou were a critically important resource to the islanders and there is no doubt the local herd was exterminated by 1900 (Pratt 2001). Second, a decreased human population after 1900 theoretically made it easier for the people who remained to harvest resources in areas to which they formerly may not have had ready access; but it does not necessarily follow that the remaining population actually expanded its subsistence and land use range. Given the strong attachments of family groups to specific sites, most people continued to use the sites they had previously used until resource failures or other factors forced them to relocate elsewhere. Also, since the human resources of different villages varied (Lantis 1946:163) opportunities to expand customary use ranges probably could not always be acted upon. As a whole, the available data suggest: (a) any such expansions that did occur were on the level of individuals and/or individual households, not population-wide; and (b) episodes of population centralization typically led to corresponding contractions of *Nuniwarmiut* land use and settlement patterns.

# CHAPTER 6: SOCIO-TERRITORIAL ORGANIZATION

From a socio-territorial perspective, the indigenous people of Nunivak Island were unique among Central Yup'ik populations in at least one way: i.e., their occupation of an isolated, insular environment physically separated the *Nuniwarmiut* from and significantly limited their social interactions with mainland Yup'ik groups (cf. Fienup-Riordan 1988:493 [note 257]). This setting also contributed to making the islanders the last of these people to be subjected to disruptive cultural changes associated with the introduction of western religious, educational and economic enterprises. Due to other historical circumstances the *Nuniwarmiut* are the most thoroughly documented of all Central Yup'ik groups, both ethnographically and archeologically. For all of these reasons, to better illuminate traditional socio-territorial organization in this region the *Nuniwarmiut* are the logical group on which attention should be focused.[64]

## Named Groups

Regarding "group names" in northwestern Alaska, Burch (2005:23) stated: "every group that had any kind of association with a particular place, locality, district, or region considered significant by the Natives had a name associating it with the area concerned." This practice was apparently common in hunter-gatherer populations, and

[64] Here, the term "traditional" means the period from initial European contact until the occurrence of major changes in customary Yup'ik land use, subsistence and settlement patterns. For the *Nuniwarmiut*, this term is replaced with the "period prior to intense contact and change"—which I define as extending from 1821 through 1940 (cf. Griffin 2004:203 [note 38]).

it also applied to the *Nuniwarmiut* and other Yup'ik peoples (e.g., Fienup-Riordan 1984:70; Shinkwin and Pete 1984:96-99; cf. Amos and Amos 2003:418; Jacobson 1984:653-663 [Demonstratives]). There was an abundance of named groups among the *Nuniwarmiut*, but most arguably did *not* designate socio-territorial units: i.e., groups of people who were associated with particular geographical areas and also recognized as individual polities (Andrews 1989:73). Many of the names were instead general terms of reference indicating the relative geographical placement of people (or "settlement areas") across Nunivak; but only contextual usage could reveal how those names actually related to action, sentiment, territoriality and membership. Group names of this sort remained applicable for as long as the associated areas were occupied, regardless of changes in the size or composition of the respective human populations. In fact, the only named groups on the island that also were clearly socio-territorial units were local groups.[65]

As defined in this study, a local group was an assemblage of relatives who considered themselves part of one social group, lived in the same winter village and followed a distinctive annual cycle, and whose boundary included all of the seasonal camps its members normally utilized. Like the other groups, local groups were named in a manner that identified their geographical affiliations with particular sites, areas or

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[65] As used herein, a local group is essentially equivalent to a "local family" (Burch (1975:237-241, 254-274), except that there is no requirement for a *Nuniwarmiut* local group to have occupied multiple dwellings; it specifically *does not* conform to a local group as defined by Malinowski (1960:163-164).

natural features. But local group names were also important markers of social identity for their members.

The term 'local group' refers to the same type of social unit Fienup-Riordan (1982, 1984) has previously labeled a "centered regional group" or "village group," respectively; but I contest Fienup-Riordan's implication of long-term stability in these units (cf. Pratt 1984a:123). *Nuniwarmiut* winter village chronologies indicate the functional lifespan of different local groups was variable, even intermittent, and the "subsistence ranges" associated with each group were only loosely "fixed" (cf. Fienup-Riordan 1984:72). The situation for mainland Yup'ik groups was no different (Pratt 1984a:26-31).

To fully evaluate her work on this subject it is important to understand that Fienup-Riordan described Yup'ik social groups of this type as she thought they existed in the *pre-contact era* (i.e., prior to ca. 1833) based on her interpretations of: (a) written historical accounts about this region; and (b) Native oral history accounts recorded some 150 years into the *post-contact era*. The associated limitations are considerable.[66] For example, the earliest historical account that contains much information about Yup'ik social groups is Zagoskin's (1967) journal of his 1842-1844 explorations, during which only a small portion of the region was visited (cf. Pratt 1984a:67, 120 [note 13]). The later travels of Nelson (1899), who arrived in the region 45 years after

[66] Most of the limitations also apply to discussions about Yup'ik "regional groups."

Zagoskin, were considerably more comprehensive but he also did not visit every local area. Thus, neither of the two best known and arguably most informative historical sources on the Yup'ik contain the data necessary to identify all Yup'ik local groups that existed in the early 1840s or the late 1880s, much less those that existed in pre-contact times. Every other historical source on the Yup'ik is similarly incomplete in regional coverage (e.g., Dall 1870; Fienup-Riordan 1988; Jacobsen 1977; Kashevarov 1994; Netsvetov 1984).

## Land and Resource Use Rights

In an earlier work (Pratt 1990) I noted that *Nuniwarmiut* oral history accounts indicate individuals and families once had exclusive use rights to cliff-hanging sites on the island, suggesting similar use restrictions possibly also applied to other types of resource harvesting locales and that a form of land "ownership" may have existed among the people prior to ca. 1900. Later efforts to obtain more data concerning this subject, however, failed to produce further evidence that cliff-hanging sites (or other types of sites) were in any sense 'owned' by individuals and/or families.

As previously explained, "Cliff-hanging "sites" are named points on the faces of cliffs; they were locales for resource procurement only, not habitation sites" (Pratt 1990:78). The principle of participatory use (Wolfe 1981:242) likely comes closer to describing the true situation relative to the use of cliff-hanging sites; that is, an individual's or family's long term use of a site vested them with certain priority rights of use

recognized by others (cf. Pratt 1990:78-80). Given the inherent dangers of cliff-hanging, I also suspect that when cliff-hangers managed to find comparatively safe and productive sites on cliff-faces from which to conduct their work it added incentive to assert and retain preferential use rights to them (cf. Pratt 1990:82). Other factors that probably contributed to a sense of exclusionary rights to such sites include the following: (a) some highly skilled cliff-hangers apparently spent most of their summers engaged in that activity; (b) cliff-hanging was evidently a "male-only" activity (Noatak 1986e:4-5) but many men did not participate due to physical inability, fear of the cliffs, other subsistence priorities, or an absence of suitable cliffs in their customary areas of use; and (c) most cliff-hangers had partners, so claims of special rights to a particular site would normally have applied to more than one person or family, thereby strengthening the claims. *Nuniwarmiut* elders who spoke about exclusive use rights to cliff-hanging sites qualified their accounts by emphasizing that they were speaking of the days of their ancestors, when the island was very heavily populated. Thus, population pressure may also have contributed to the notion of exclusive rights to cliff-hanging sites prior to 1900. But there is no evidence that any person was ever forced to abandon a cliff-hanging site due to another's stronger, competing claim—or, for that matter, any evidence of disputes in general focused on sites of this type.

Finally, it is helpful to think of cliff-hanging sites on a section of cliffs as somewhat analogous to individual house, cache or tent sites at a given settlement. The latter structures were recognized as the property of specific persons who built and regularly

used them; but those persons were not considered owners of the land on which the structures were erected or of the settlement that contained them (cf. Lantis 1946:178). With respect to cliff formations, the site used by a particular cliff-hanger was marked by a large wooden stake (*kavagcir* [Noatak 1986d]) set in the ground above the place at which he descended the cliff to hunt for birds, eggs and greens (see Hoffman 1990:67-68). When other cliff-hangers looking for sites from which to work the cliffs saw a wooden stake on the cliff-top it was likely recognized as an existing claim to the cliff area below—but it did not constitute rights of ownership to the land in which the stake was set or to a section of the cliffs proper. Presumably, as long as the person who normally used the place was not present it could be used by others; but it may have been customary to obtain the person's permission first.

Territorial restrictions reportedly associated with major caribou hunting sites (Pratt 2001) are also best explained by the principle of participatory use, and probably secondarily by human population pressure prior to 1900. Individual caribou hunters are said to have used the same camp site every year (Pratt 2001:36) and all such camps contained stone dwelling structures. Thus, stone dwellings at caribou hunting camps may have been considered personal property in the same way that sod dwellings at other sites were. Because suggested restrictions on who could use certain caribou hunting sites were consistently couched in terms of *local groups*, however, and no such site was linked to just one group, the implication is that extensive co-utilization of caribou hunting areas was a basic feature of *Nuniwarmiut* land use patterns.

Considered as part of the larger body of information about land and resource use patterns, the caribou hunting data also do not contain any compelling evidence for an indigenous system of land ownership or fixed territorial boundaries between *Nuniwarmiut* local groups during historic times.

It is likely that a variety of practical considerations constrained a person from going anywhere on the island he wanted, for any purpose, at any time; but in the final analysis the data tend to support the assertion that "Everyone had full rights to hunt anywhere he desired" (Lantis 1946:178). Certainly, there is no clear evidence to the contrary.

## Local Group Identification and Persistence

Every winter village identified in the previous chapter once constituted a local group, but their respective viabilities as such were inconstant during the study period. Still, the use chronologies compiled for past winter villages—specifically information regarding their reported dates of establishment and abandonment—makes feasible the production of socio-territorial maps of *Nuniwarmiut* local groups at each 20-year interval from 1880 through 1960.

With few exceptions, the data do not allow for precise determinations of the years in which a given winter village/local group came into being or disappeared. Given the 20-year units of analyses, therefore, if evidence indicates a particular village was occupied in the winter of 1913 it is herein treated as an extant local group for the period from

1900-1919 (even if the data are silent about whether the site served as a winter village at any other point during that period). Despite the temporal imprecision of some of the data, the *Nuniwarmiut* are currently the only population in southwestern Alaska for which it is possible to produce socio-territorial maps at this degree of accuracy over an extended period of time (i.e., in a diachronic manner). The comparatively high volume and detail of the *Nuniwarmiut* data notwithstanding, I am unwilling to conjure up such a map of the island for the pre-contact era (i.e., prior to 1821): doing so would be an exercise in speculation leading to an end product of indeterminate accuracy (cf. Pratt 1984a:122-124).

As the data below suggest, the only constant throughout the study period was existence of the *Nuniwarmiut* society; but the number of its constituent parts steadily decreased from ca. 1880 through 1960.[67] Since many of the winter villages around which groups were formed are not mentioned in the available written accounts or census records, my determination of which local groups existed between 1880 and 1899 rests on two assumptions: (i) *Nuniwarmiut* oral history accounts collected from 1986-1991 can reliably be pushed back to before 1900; and (ii) every area of the island represented by the local groups listed for this earliest period contained permanent residents during the

[67] As used herein, the term "society" denotes a level of social identity above the local group and applies to the *Nuniwarmiut* collectively. My use of this term is consistent with Shinkwin and Pete (1984) and expresses my preference over its synonyms—as previously applied to the Central Yup'ik—"regional groups" (Fienup-Riordan 1984) and "nations" (Fienup-Riordan 1990:153; cf. Burch 1998:8; 2006:5-9).

applicable 20-year window of time. I make these assumptions with confidence they are both reasonable and accurate.

In each temporal unit the identified local groups are listed in geographical sequence, beginning from the area of Cape Etolin and moving clockwise around the island. Also, winter villages/local groups that could appropriately be called by either of two names are identified below by the name most commonly used by the *Nuniwarmiut* today (e.g., *Qengartaaremiut* instead of *Narulkirnarmiut*).

**1880-1899** (Figure 4): the data suggest up to 27 separate local groups were present on Nunivak as of ca. 1880. These were named as follows: *Pengurpagmiut*, *Kangirrlagmiut*, *Qaneryagtalegmiut*, *Am'igtulirmiut*, *Cikuyuilngurmiut*, *Paamiut*, *Nuqariillermiut*, *Kiiwigmiut*, *Nunarrlugarmiut*, *Tacirmiut*, *Qengartaaremiut*, *Itegmiut*, *Englullugmiut*, *Igwaryarermiut*, *Ciguralegmiut*, *Iquarmiut*, *Penacuarmiut*, *Kenirlermiut*, *Asweryagmiut*, *Carwarmiut*, *Qayigyalegmiut*, *Talungmiut*, *Tacirrarmiut*, *Miqsarmiut*, *Ellikarrmiut*, *Negermiut* and *Cugg'egmiut*.

The number of local groups thought to have been extant during this period is indicative of a large population.

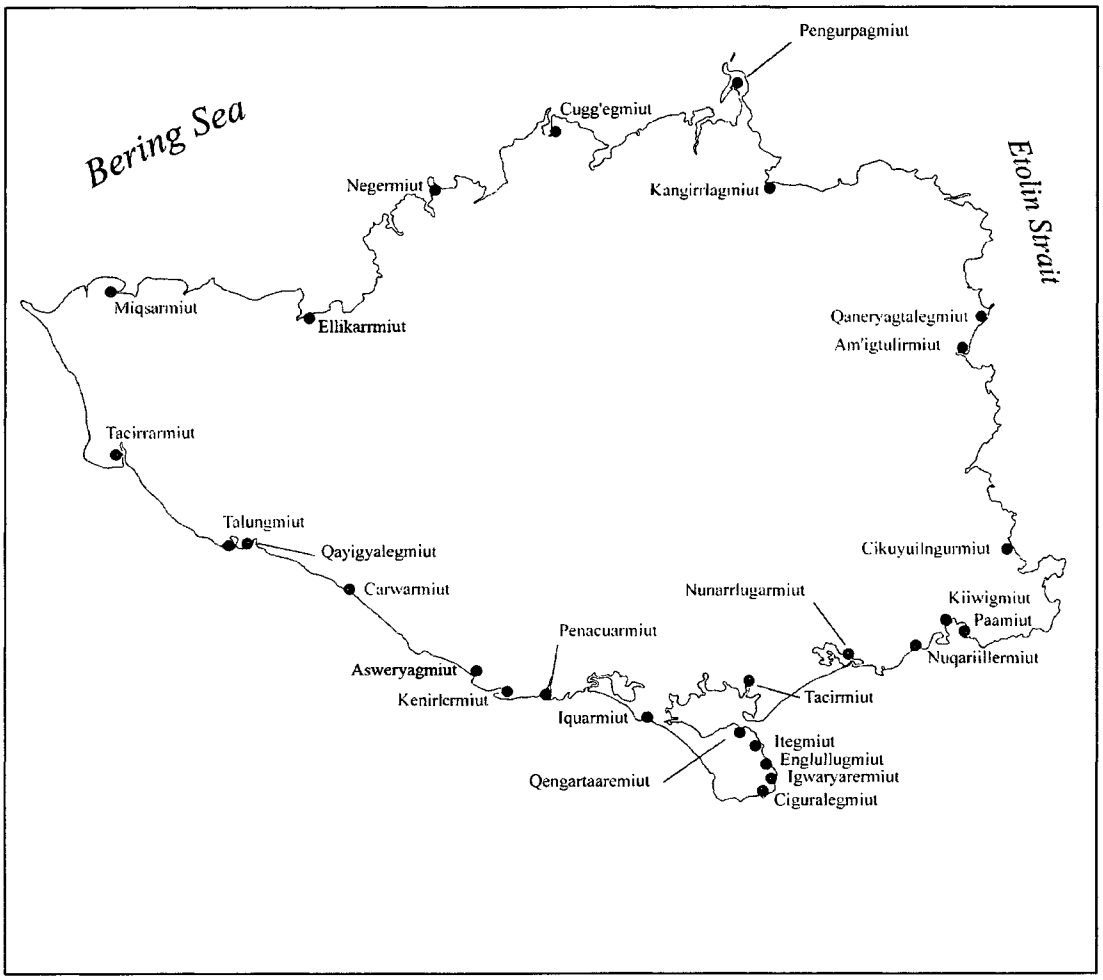


Figure 4: Local Groups, 1880-1899

**1900-1919** (Figure 5): up to 30 local groups were present on the island ca. 1900. They were named as follows: *Pengurpagmiut*, *Mikuryarmiut*, *Qavlumiut*, *Kangirrlagmiut*, *Qaneryagtalegmiut*, *Am'igtulirmiut*, *Cikuyuilngurmiut*, *Paamiut*, *Nuqariillermiut*, *Kiiwigmiut*, *Nunarrlugarmiut*, *Tacirmiut*, *Qengartaaremiut*, *Itegmiut*, *Englullugmiut*, *Igwaryarermiut*, *Ciguralegmiut*, *Iquarmiut*, *Ucingurmiut*, *Penacuarmiut*, *Kenirlermiut*,

*Carwarmiut*, *Qayigyalegmiut*, *Talungmiut*, *Tacirrarmiut*, *Miqsarmiut*, *Ellikarrmiut*, *Negermiut*, *Kangiremiut* and *Cugg'egmiut*.[68]

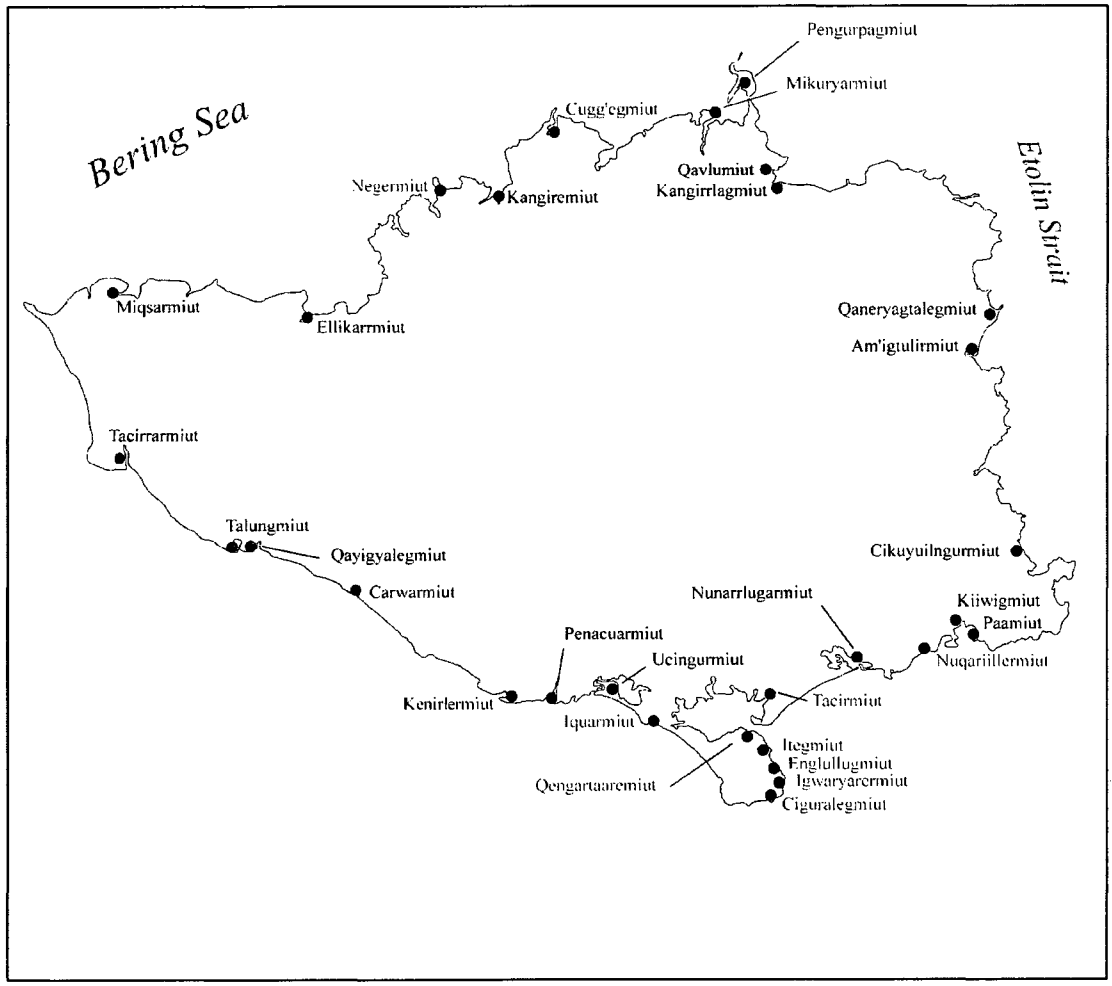


Figure 5: Local Groups, 1900-1919

[68] The changes from the previous period are that *Asweryagmiut* had been abandoned as a winter village by 1900, and *Mikuryarmiut*, *Qavlumiut*, *Ucingurmiut* and *Kangiremiut* became occupied as winter villages after that date.

The approximately 11% increase from the previous period in the number of viable local groups suggests a large and growing population—which seems incongruent with the abundant oral history reporting high mortalities due to an epidemic (probably smallpox) that struck the island around 1900. But this may just reflect the greater volume of data concerning *Nuniwarmiut* land use and settlement history for this period (1900-1919) compared to the previous one: i.e., more winter villages may have existed betweeen 1880-1899 than can be demonstrated by the available data. There is at least one other possible explanation, however: the epidemic might have caused increased population movements and those (not an increasing population) accounted for the rise in winter villages during this later period. After all, in this reconstruction a site only had to be occupied for one winter to qualify as a winter village.

**1920-1939** (Figure 6): a maximum of 18 local groups existed on Nunivak as of ca. 1920. They consisted of the following: *Mikuryarmiut*, *Kangirrlagmiut*, *Qaneryagtalegmiut*, *Am'igtulirmiut*, *Ingrimiut*, *Paamiut*, *Nunarrlugarmiut*, *Qengartaaremiut*, *Itegmiut*, *Ciguralegmiut*, *Ucingurmiut*, *Carwarmiut*, *Talungmiut*, *Tacirrarmiut*, *Miqsarmiut*, *Ellikarrmiut*, *Negermiut* and *Kangiremiut*.

By 1920, the data indicate a decrease of about 41% in the number of local groups that were on Nunivak from ca. 1900-1919. This is interpreted to be the result of high mortalities due to epidemic diseases, most notably influenza (1918-1921).

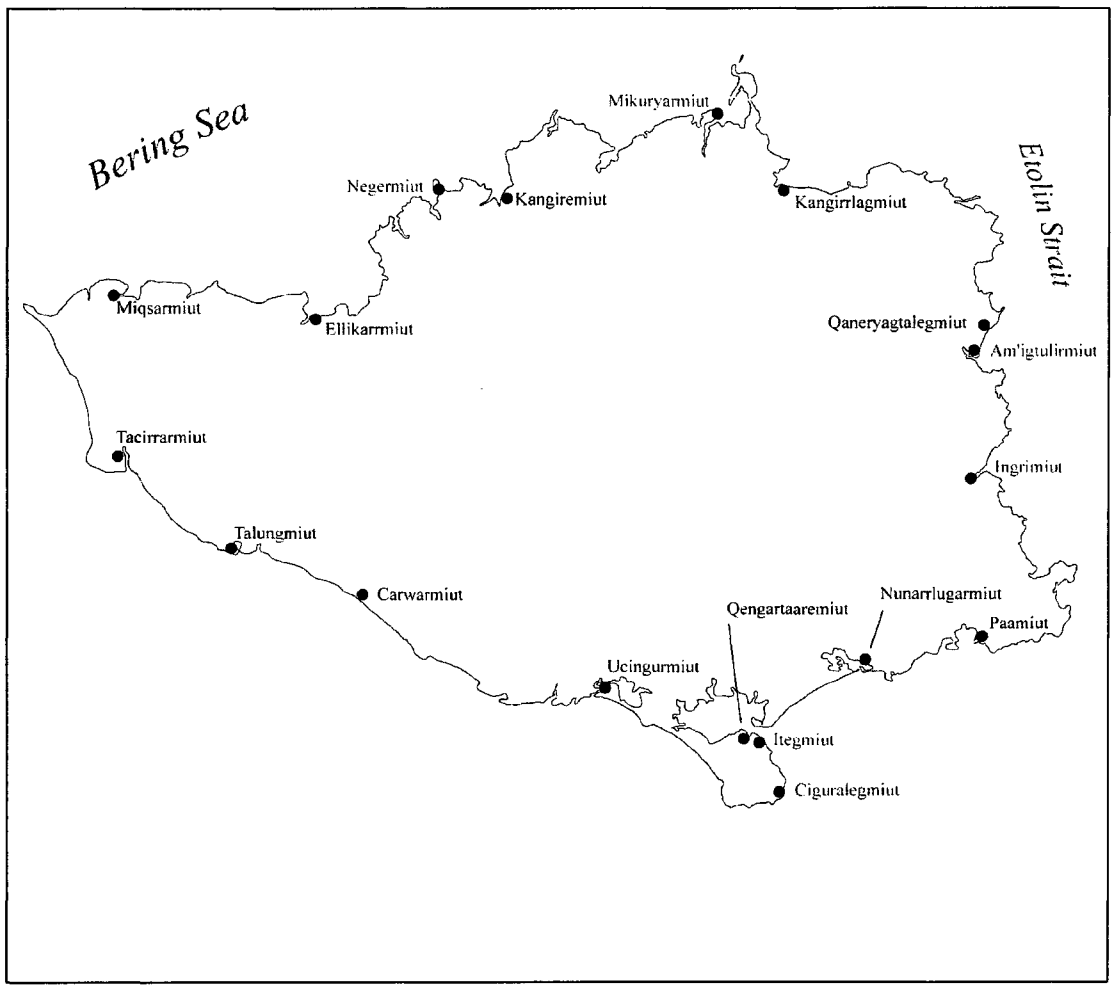


Figure 6: Local Groups, 1920-1939

**1940-1959** (Figure 7): only seven local groups remained on the island as of 1940. They are identified as follows: *Mikuryarmiut*, *Qavlumiut*, *Qaneryagtalegmiut*, *Paamiut*, *Nunarrlugarmiut*, *Tacirrarmiut* and *Ellikarrmiut*.

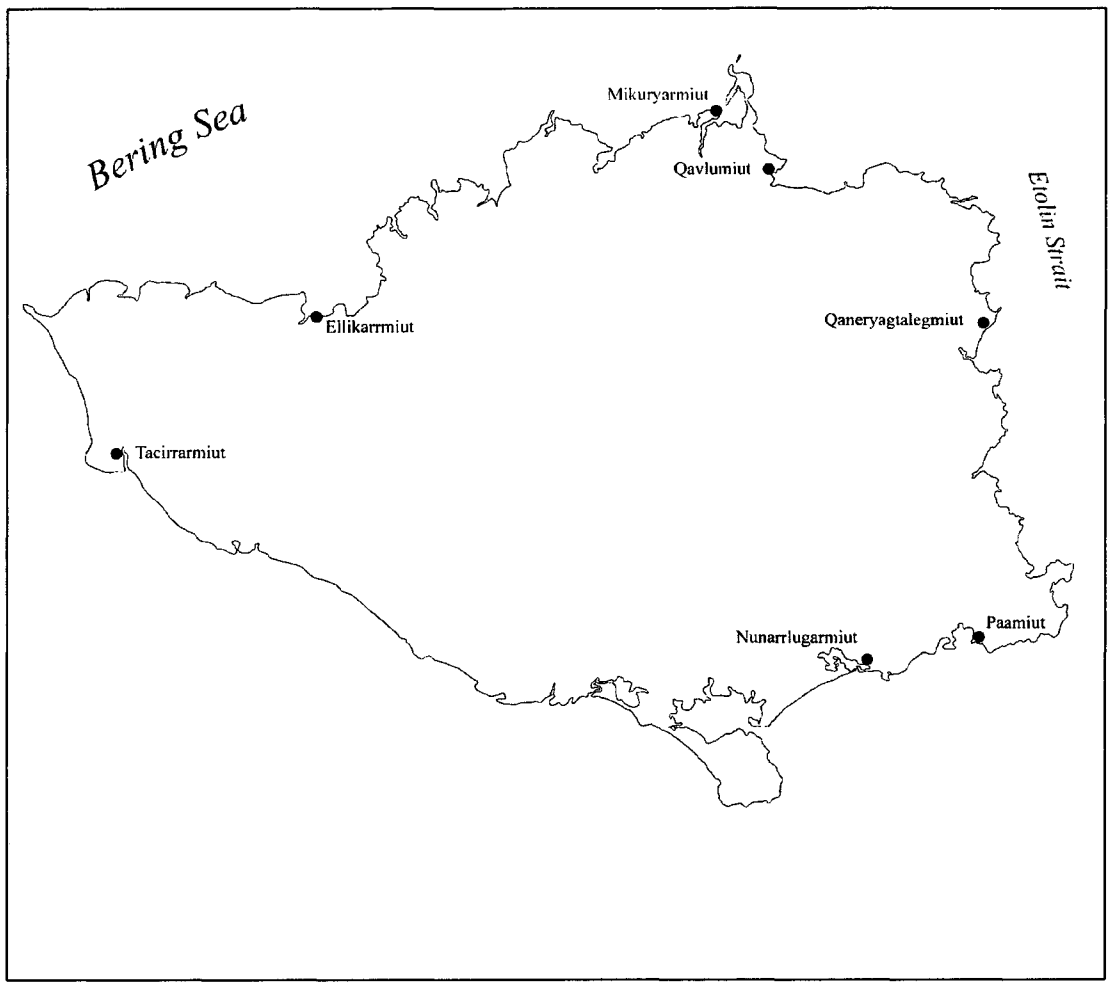


Figure 7: Local Groups, 1940-1959

The period from ca. 1920-1939 saw a decline of about 61% in the number of functional local groups among the *Nuniwarmiut.* The influenza epidemic of 1918-1921 was no doubt a factor in this decline, as were measles and other infectious diseases (e.g., see Griffin 2004:94-95). But the main cause for the disappearance of so many local groups was population centralization due to Western educational, economic and religious enterprises on the island.

**1960**: by this date only one local group, the *Mikuryarmiut*, can conceivably be identified on Nunivak—but it had been transformed into a social unit that no longer matched the definition of a local group. As the sole remaining winter village, *Mikuryarmiut* had become the home of all island residents, many of whom had moved there from former winter villages around the island so were affiliated with seasonal sites well outside the original *Mikuryarmiut* local group area. Together with the dramatic changes in land use patterns that had occurred by that date, this justifies the conclusion that *Nuniwarmiut* local groups had disappeared by 1960.

The 100% decline in *Nuniwarmiut* local groups that occurred between ca. 1940-1959 is probably entirely attributable to population centralization associated with Western economic, educational and religious enterprises. The abandonment of otherwise viable winter villages because of such enterprises often occurred with considerable reluctance, particularly given family groups' ancestral ties to those places. In fact, oral accounts indicate *Mikuryarmiut* once had distinct "neighborhoods" composed of people who had moved there from other winter villages. This indicates vestiges of local group identities persisted even after the *Nuniwarmiut* had been consolidated in *Mikuryarmiut*.

## Sealing Groups on Nunivak Island[69]

Besides co-occupation of a particular territory (however defined), if there is a defining criterion by which Yup'ik populations have previously been designated "regional groups" it is probably best stated as "an association between two or more local or village groups." The association must have been formalized by a recognized group name—even if (a) it simply indicated a shared environmental setting (e.g., *Cenarmiut* ["coastal people"]) and (b) and was only used as a designation for the group by outsiders. Real or potential collective social action between group members (e.g., warfare or marriage alliances, ceremonial exchanges) reportedly formalized such associations among the Yup'ik.

The breadth of this criterion would hypothetically support the designation of numerous such groups on Nunivak Island alone. Since each group's member populations would have been neighbors to one another it is reasonable to assume at least some of them interacted socially on occasion, and all of them *potentially* could have had such interactions. But among the *Nuniwarmiut* the only groups that fit the broad definition of "regional" groups and definitely involved regular collective social action were those that came together for spring or fall subsistence sealing. The geographical limits of the subject groups are described below, beginning in the Mekoryuk area and moving clockwise around the island (Figure 8).

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[69] Kay Hendrickson [Hendrickson and Hendrickson 1991], born in 1909, was the source of information for these groups.

(1) ***Pengurpagmiut***: reportedly included people who wintered at *Mikuryarmiut*, *Pengurpagmiut*, *Kangirrlagmiut* and/or *Qavlumiut*, and those who normally camped at *Taprarmiut* and *Qanitarmiut*. This group used Cape Etolin, the northernmost tip of Nunivak Island, for spring sealing. The prominent dunes (*pengurpag*) provide the group's name, which was also shared with its most important settlement.

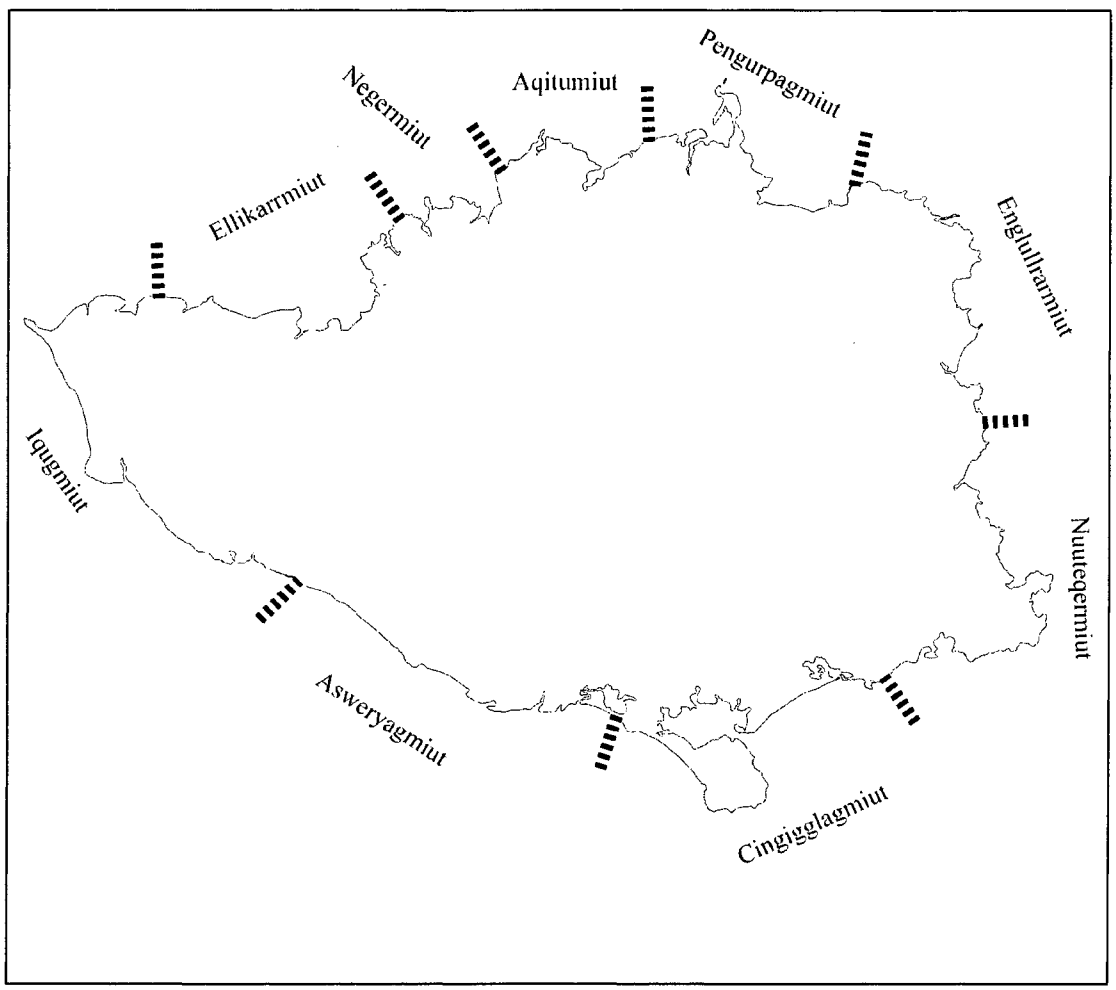


Figure 8: Sealing Groups, 1880-1940

(2) ***Englullrarmiut***: apparently included people who wintered at *Qaneryagtalegmiut* and/or *Am'igtulirmiut*, and those who normally camped at *Englullrarmiut* and *Nuugavluarmiut*. This group used "Cape Manning," the extreme northeastern end of Nunivak, for spring sealing. The group takes its name from the settlement of the same name.

(3) ***Nuuteqermiut***: included people who wintered at *Ingrimiut*, *Cikuyuilngurmiut*, *Paamiut/Cuqucuryarmiut*, *Nuqariillermiut* and/or *Kiiwigmiut*, and those who normally spring camped at *Nuuteqermiut*. This group went to the *Cing'ig* area, a point on the southeast coast, for spring sealing and was named after that landform's most important spring camp.

(4) ***Cingigglagmiut***: consisted of people who normally went to Cape Mendenhall for spring sealing, including those from the following winter villages: *Nunarrlugarmiut*, *Tacirmiut*, *Qengartaaremiut/Narulkirnarmiut*, *Itegmiut*, *Englullugmiut*, *Igwaryarermiut*, *Ciguralegmiut* and *Iquarmiut*. People who summer camped at *Iqangmiut* were also considered members of this group. The group name is based on that of Cape Mendenhall (i.e., *Cingigglag*), the southernmost part of Nunivak Island.

(5) ***Asweryagmiut***: apparently included people who wintered at *Ucingurmiut*, *Penacuarmiut*, *Kenirlermiut*, *Asweryagmiut* and/or *Carwarmiut*. People who normally summer camped at *Ciqengmiut* and *Mecagmiut* were also considered

members of this group. This group used Nunivak's southwest coast for spring and fall sealing and was named after the site of *Asweryagmiut*, situated near the mid-point of its sealing grounds.

(6) ***Iqugmiut***: evidently included people who wintered at *Miqsarmiut*, *Tacirrarmiut*, *Talungmiut* and/or *Qayigyalegmiut*, as well as those who normally camped at *Iqugmiut*. This group used Cape Mohican (i.e., *Iq'ug*), the western end of Nunivak, for spring sealing and was named after that landform.

(7) ***Ellikarrmiut***: included people who wintered at *Ellikarrmiut/Qimugglugpagmiut*, and also those who normally camped at *Qikumiut* and *Pimaayug*. This group was geographically centered at Nash Harbor—the most important fall sealing area on Nunivak Island—and shared its name with the largest settlement along its shores.

(8) ***Negermiut***: included people who wintered at *Kangiremiut* and/or *Negermiut*. This group went spring and fall sealing in the area from *Cingigarmiut* eastward to *Kangiremiut*. It took its name from the site of *Negermiut*, situated at about the mid-point of the group's sealing grounds.

(9) ***Aqitumiut***: included people who wintered at *Cugg'egmiut* and those who normally camped at *Aqitumiut*. The group's name is based on that of the peninsula *Aqitur*, an important fall seal netting area.

To reduce terminological confusion, in the following discussion the sealing units just described are provisionally treated as "regional groups" to simplify the task of pointing out various problems involved with formally designating them as such. One potential argument against such a designation is that the geographical boundaries of two of the sealing groups (i.e., *Ellikarrmiut* and *Aqitumiut*) encompassed just one winter village/local group; the others included two or more, thereby satisfying the 'membership' aspect of the regional group definition previously applied to the Yup'ik. More significant yet, five of the nine groups [i.e., *Pengurpagmiut*, *Englullrarmiut*, *Nuuteqermiut*, *Cingigglagmiut*, *Iqugmiut*] were organized around spring sealing areas, two [*Ellikarrmiut*, *Aqitumiut*] around fall sealing areas, and the remaining two [*Asweryagmiut*, *Negermiut*] around areas at which sealing occurred in both spring and fall. Hence most or all of them only comprised groups of a 'regional' scale on a seasonal basis.

As further support for this position, the geographical limits of these sealing groups typically did not coincide with social limits—because local groups situated within the area delimited for one group often went sealing in areas described for other groups. This is not the same scenario described with regard to the sharing of lands and resources between members of different Yup'ik regional groups on the mainland (e.g., Fienup-Riordan 1984:73-74); the seasonality of *Nuniwarmiut* sealing groups is the critical difference. Thus, numerous local groups that comprised the **spring**

sealing groups *Cingigglagmiut*, *Iqugmiut*, *Negermiut* and *Pengurpagmiut* could correctly be considered members of the **fall** sealing groups *Ellikarrmiut* or *Aqitumiut*, because they normally went to one or the other of those areas for seal netting in the fall. Likewise, in the spring members of the **fall** sealing group *Ellikarrmiut* typically went sealing in areas delineated for the **spring** sealing group *Iqugmiut*, a practice that would also have made them members of that group. Distinctions of this sort are only possible because of the richness and combination of the *Nuniwarmiut* data sets consulted in this study.

This reconstruction takes the emphasis away from winter villages as site types around which groups were organized, suggesting the winter ceremonial season may not have been as important relative to integrating members of different local groups in some parts of the Yup'ik world as it was in others. It also underscores the importance of sealing to the *Nuniwarmiut*. On Nunivak, the winter ceremonial season was sandwiched between the fall and spring seal hunts—the latter of which was heavily ritualized (Lantis 1946:195-196; 1984:220-221). The Bladder Festival (or "the Feast for Seals' Souls" [Lantis 1984:220-221]) was the most important of ritual events and annually took place in December at winter villages; but the actual sites/areas from which seals were harvested may have held more significance to the *Nuniwarmiut* than the villages where those festivals occurred.

Sealing areas linked to individual winter villages described in the previous chapter often conflict with the member-villages/local groups of the regional sealing groups delineated above. This reinforces other evidence indicating major shifts in land use patterns occurred after 1900, consistent with oral accounts attributing prior site use "restrictions" to high population densities. A few remarks about the viability over time of the sealing groups just described are appropriate at this point.

All nine groups (*Pengurpagmiut, Englullrarmiut, Nuuteqermiut, Cingigglagmiut, Asweryagmiut, Iqugmiut, Ellikarrmiut, Negermiut, Aqitumiut*) remained viable through ca. 1900. But settlement history data indicate that by 1920 at least one of the groups (*Asweryagmiut*) no longer existed; by 1940 two others (*Negermiut, Aqitumiut*) had also disappeared. Because the six groups remaining at that date existed in largely fragmented forms, it is reasonable to conclude that sealing groups among the *Nuniwarmiut* had lost much of their relevance by 1940. Consolidation of the island's population into a single winter village (*Mikuryarmiut*) by 1960, together with related changes in historic land use patterns, effectively rendered sealing groups meaningless. The *Nuniwarmiut* society still existed (and does to this day), but in a much less complicated form.

## Other Nuniwarmiut Groups

Numerous other group names reported in *Nuniwarmiut* oral accounts designated residents of selected areas of the island, with the geographical limits of most

encompassing two or more winter villages. Here again, the working definition of Yup'ik regional groups is sufficiently broad to accommodate all of these units. The majority of these group names referred to populations of "others" relative to the speaker and typically were conceived of in purely geographical terms (see Fienup-Riordan 1984:70; Shinkwin and Pete 1984:96-99; cf. Jacobson 1984:653-663 [Demonstratives]; Wolfe 1981:244). The subject group names and their associated geographical coverages are listed below, with the names separated by source into four sets. The first two derive from single-session interviews conducted for the specific purpose of determining if named groups between the local group and societal levels were formerly recognized among the *Nuniwarmiut.* (Sealing groups were documented through an interview of the same type.) The latter two name sets are based on less formalized question and answer exchanges about *Nuniwarmiut* directional terms. The inconsistencies revealed by comparing Name Sets 3 and 4 reflect the high level of complexity related to directional terms (cf. Amos and Amos 2003:418; Lantis 1946:171), one aspect of which is that individual perceptions vary concerning the geographical inclusiveness of such terms.

**Name Set 1**[70] (Figure 9):

***Kangirrlug*** ("a large bay"): reportedly included the area from *Pengurpagmiut* (Cape Etolin)/*Mikuryarmiut* (Mekoryuk) to *Penguarat* ("[ones that resemble] dunes").

[70] Olie Olrun (1991), born in 1913, was the source of the information in this name set.

***Akulurr'er*** ("ocean separating mainland Alaska and Nunivak Island" [Etolin Strait]): applied to most of the area on the east coast bounded by Etolin Strait, from *Penguarat* to at least *Ingrimiut*.

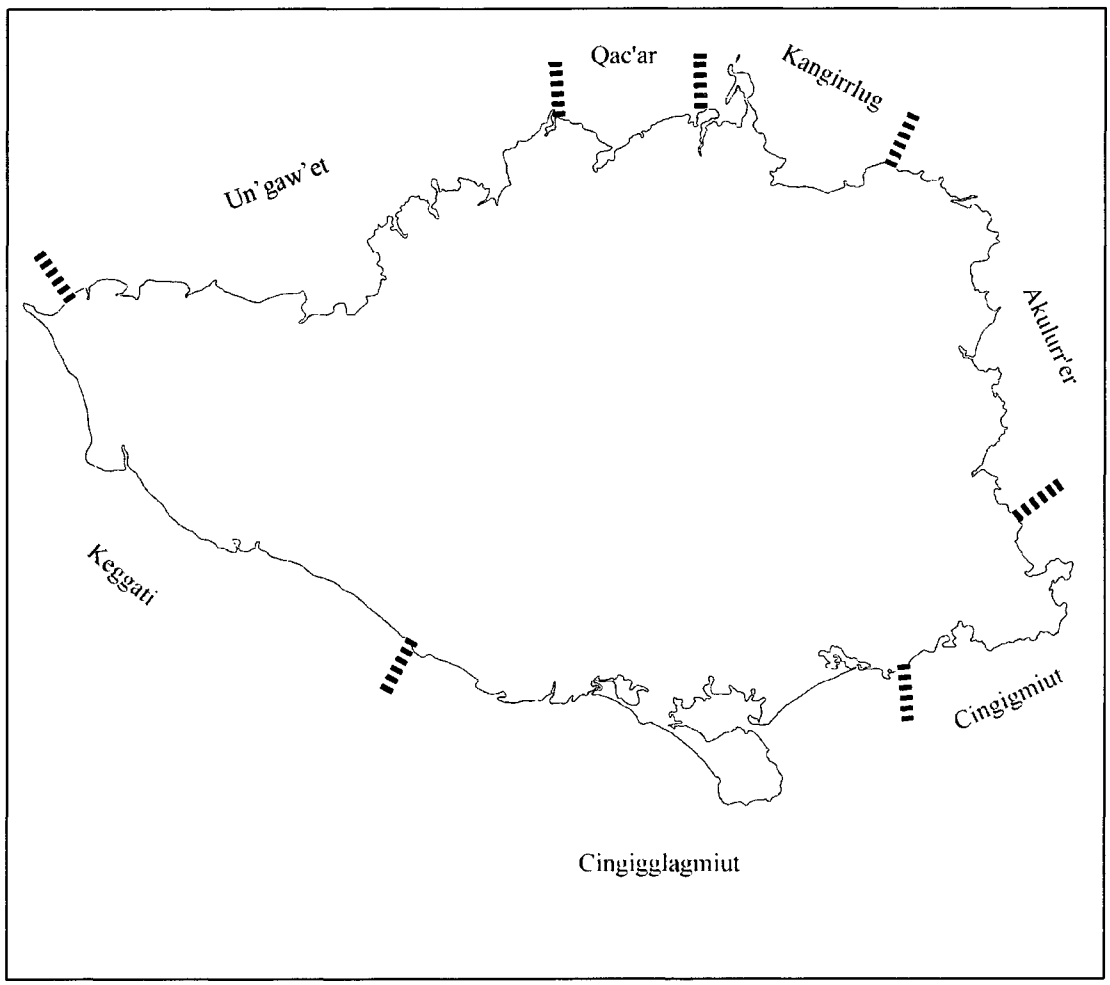


Figure 9: Name Set 1

***Cingigmiut*** ("residents of an old protruding land point"): delineated the area from about *Iqalliiwigmiut* ("residents of a place for fishing") southwest to *Paamiut*. The limits described for this group may partly overlap those of the *Akulerr'er*.

***Cingigglagmiut***: pertained to the Cape Mendenhall vicinity, broadly speaking. The area to which this name could apply reportedly extended from *Nunarrlugarmiut* west to *Qaugyit* ("sands; their sandy area") and inland to *Qagan* ("source lake" [Karon Lake]).

***Keggati*** ("its torso" [the torso of Nunivak Island]): applied to the area from *Qaugyit* to *Iq'ug*.

***Unkumiut*** ("the ones residing down below"): applied to the entire southern half of Nunivak Island, from *Iq'ug* to *Cing'ig*. As such, this designation subsumes the previous two groups (i.e., *Cingigglagmiut*, *Keggati*). To limit possible confusion, this group is not represented on Figure 9.

***Un'gaw'et*** (translation uncertain): included the area from *Iq'ug* (Cape Mohican) to *Aqitumiut* [characterized as "the beginning of the west coast" (Olrun 1991)].

***Qac'ar*** ("open to the sea"): applied to the north coast area from *Aqitumiut* to *Pengurpagmiut* (Cape Etolin)/*Mikuryarmiut* (Mekoryuk).

**Name Set 2**[71] (Figure 10):

***Tacirrlag*** ("major estuary" [Duchikthluk Bay]): applied to people of the Duchikthluk Bay area.

***Cing'ig*** ("protruding land point" [Cape Corwin]): designated people from the area of Cape Corwin.

***Cingigglag*** ("a major point of land" [Cape Mendenhall]): referred to the residents of Cape Mendenhall.

***Nunarrlugarmiut***: in this usage, the name applies not just to residents of the village of the same name, but to residents of the entire estuary (i.e., *Nunarrlugarmiut Taciat*) on which it and several other sites (e.g., *Iqangmiut*, *Kuiggluarmiut*) are situated.

***Paamiut***: this is the exact same type of name as the one above, applying to residents of all sites along the shores of an important estuary (*Paamiut Taciat*), including the village of *Paamiut*.

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[71] Walter Amos (Amos and Amos 1991), born in 1920, was the source of information for this name set.

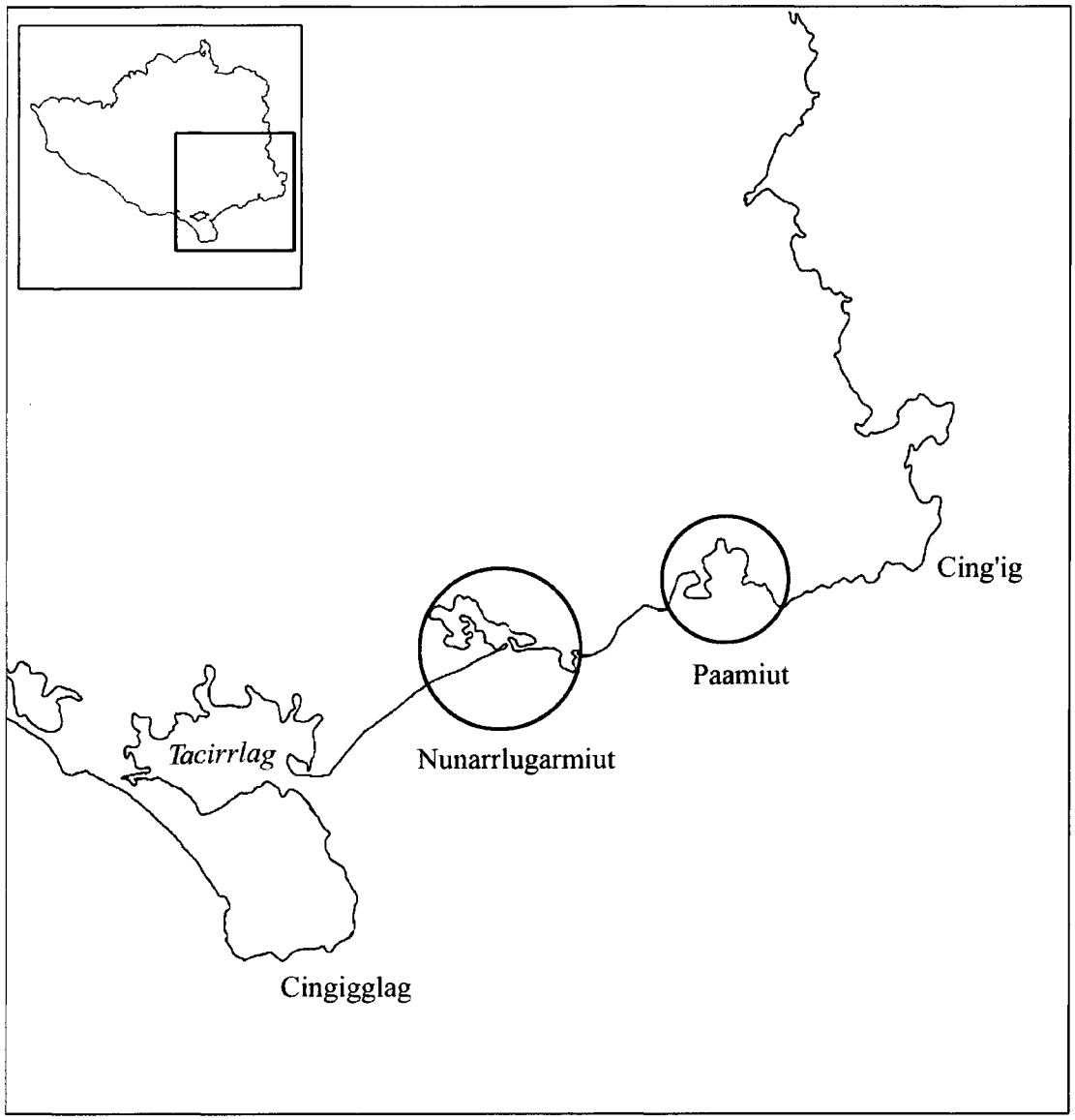


Figure 10: Name Set 2

This name set only covers one section of the island but its inclusion helps emphasize individual differences of perspective relative to group designations.

**Name Set 3**[72] (Figure 11):

***Agkumiut***: people of the east coast, in general. No more specific geographical limits were obtained for this group.

***Unkumiut***: people of the south coast, in general. As noted above, Olrun (1991) reported this same group name and said it applied to residents of the entire southern half of the island. In the present case, however, the people this group name encompassed were those living in the area extending from about *Paamiut* west to *Mecagmiut*. This expresses a more restricted conception of the island's south coast.

***Unegkumiut***: people of the west coast, in general. This group name applied to residents of the area running from about *Carwarmiut* around *Iq'ug* and eastward along the north coast to *Negermiut*.

***Waasiarmiut***: people of the north coast, in general. Specific geographical limits were not provided for this grouping, but it clearly included residents of the *Aqitur* vicinity.

[72] Howard Amos (personal communication, 2001), born in 1951, provided the information in this name set.

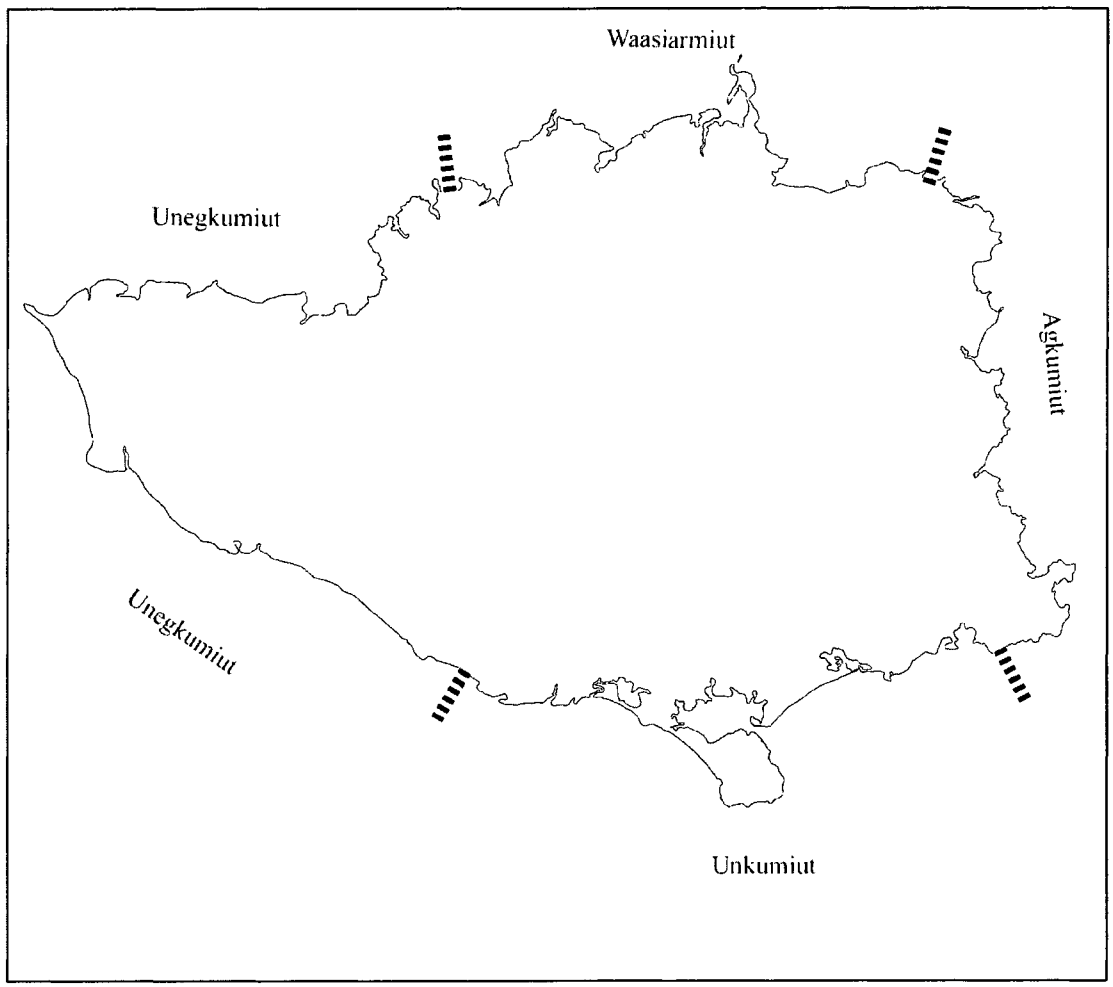


Figure 11: Name Set 3

**Name Set 4**[73] (Figure 12):

***Waasiarmiut*** ("residents of the north"): applied to the area from *Ellikarrmiut* (Nash Harbor) east to *Englullrarmiut* (Cape Manning).

[73] Howard Amos (personal communication, 2008) provided the information in this name set.

***Arninermiut*** ("residents of the east"): included the area from *Englullrarmiut* (Cape Manning) south to *Cing'ig* (Cape Corwin).

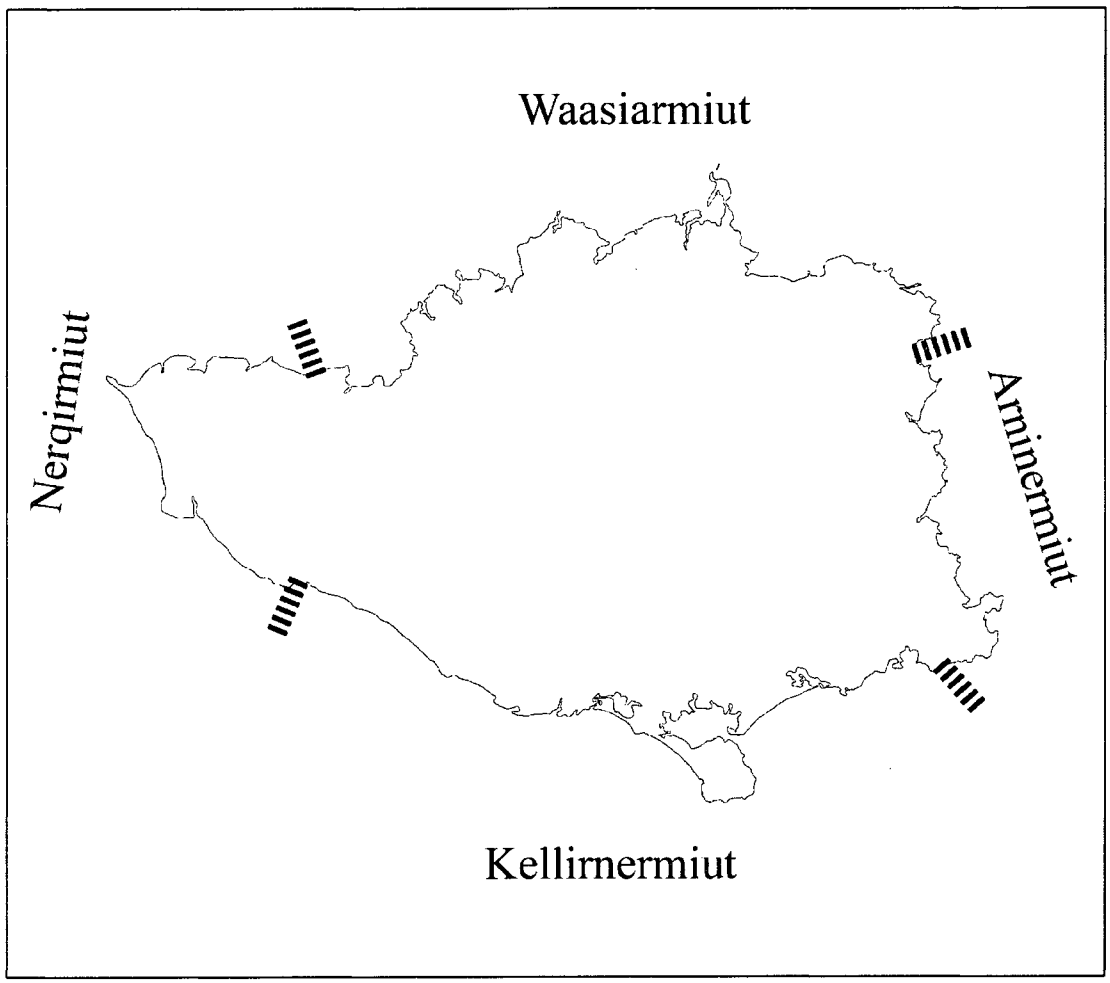


Figure 12: Name Set 4

***Kellirnermiut*** ("residents of the south" [or "the outer area" (Andrew Noatak, 90NUN002)]): included the area from *Cing'ig* (Cape Corwin) west to *Qayigyalegmiut.*

***Nerqirmiut*** ("residents of the west"): included the area from *Qayigyalegmiut* northwest to *Iq'ug* [Cape Mohican] then east to *Ellikarrmiut.*

Given land use and settlement history on the island—especially the process of population centralization—it is not surprising that data presented in the above name sets indicates that the older the informant the larger the number of named regional-type groupings the person was likely to distinguish. After all, the temptation to assign names to groups of people in particular areas of a region can only exist as long as those areas are inhabited. More importantly, however, the name set data constitute evidence that the historic *Nuniwarmiut* could conceivably be described as consisting of between four and seven different "regional groups"—all of whose names and/or geographical areas differed from those given for the [nine] sealing groups. Thus, as many as 16 groups of regional-scope have been identified on the island. Further, by considering these data in combination with the sealing group data it is theoretically possible to identify two different forms of such groups on Nunivak: one comprisedof people who were co-residents of specific geographical areas, and the other of people

who went sealing together at a particular site or area.[74] But the perseverance of any such group depended on the continued viability of its constituent local groups.

No matter how many potential regional groups one could identify on the island based on their definition in the anthropological literature on the Yup'ik, however, there is absolutely no evidence to support treating them as socio-political units. This is contrary to existing descriptions of Yup'ik regional groups, which are said to have been equivalent to nations (Fienup-Riordan 1990:153). Additionally, groupings described above that are based on directional terms were not actual social units; but such names were reported to me in ways that implied the opposite. I have included them in this discussion to help emphasize the fact that my efforts to document named social units above the local group level among the *Nuniwarmiut* were often met with confusion; this reinforces the importance of understanding the context in which any name used to designate a 'group' was initially reported.

As just demonstrated, the available ethnographic data and the existing definition of Central Yup'ik regional groups would allow for the delineation of multiple such entities among the *Nuniwarmiut*. This determination challenges the basic utility of the regional group concept as previously applied to the Yup'ik. These problems underlie much of the remaining discussion in this chapter; a discussion informed and brought into focus by the results of the present study.

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[74] Regional groups of the latter form have not previously been described for any Central Yup'ik population.

## Territoriality

The *Nuniwarmiut* had multiple socio-territorial organizations in the form of discrete, named local groups with recognized—but generalized, not fixed—geographical limits or "boundaries," which were neither exclusive nor defended. There were apparently no restrictions against the members of one group entering into any other group's territory and using resources contained therein. Kinship connections between local groups obviously facilitated such freedom of movement across the island. This position is supported by extensive settlement history, individual/family residence history, and genealogical data (parts of which are not presented in this study). In fact, analysis of the genealogical data she compiled led Lantis (1946:234) to conclude: "Since all [*Nuniwarmiut*] villages intermarried, everyone on the island was related to everyone else. One could scarcely avoid marrying a distant relative."

But individual and group kinship ties were only part of the equation; a principle referred to here as "relational stewardship" was also at play, and it helped to keep the human and non-human worlds in balance. The following remarks by Fienup-Riordan describe the general tenets of this principle quite well.

> ...for the Yup'ik, rights to land use were not based on and could not be reduced to an isolatable relationship of possession between an individual man or group at any one point in time to a particular site. Rather, the concept of ownership is

> a relational one, where a man has a right to, and in fact an obligation to, use a site because of his relationship to previous generations of people who had a definite relationship to the species taken at the same place. In other words, you have a right to use a site not because you own the land, but because your grandparent (by name and by birth) hunted there and had a relationship with the animals of that area. If a man is his grandfather incarnate, the animals that give themselves to him are those that gave themselves to his grandfather. His right to resource extraction is fundamentally relational, rather than possessive, and therefore tied to territorial boundaries only insofar as these reflect social ones (Fienup-Riordan 1984:74; cf. Fienup-Riordan 1990:167-191).

Whereas the preceding passage emphasized a person's right to use particular sites based on ancestral social/kinship relations with the species harvested at those places, it is also important to note that such rights of use carried a responsibility for proper stewardship of the sites—which depended largely on respectful treatment of the non-human persons within those areas (cf. Anderson 1998:75; Fienup-Riordan 1994:88-142; Scott 1988:38-39). Though the namesake component of the quoted description was not relevant on Nunivak, there is good evidence that the *Nuniwarmiut* also practiced this principle of land and resource use (e.g., Griffin 2004:132, 143, 162; Lantis 1946:193-195; Sonne 1988:60-64).

How do cultural beliefs that animals [or non-human persons] gave themselves to humans as long as the latter satisfied certain rules of behavior concerning proper treatment of and respect for animals mesh with the concept of territoriality? Not too well in my view. In such a belief system, human survival was reliant upon the maintenance of appropriate human-animal respect relationships (e.g., Fienup-Riordan 1985; 1988:468 [note 73], 469-470 [note 79], 482 [note 163]; Morrow 1984:127; Nelson 1899:392-393; cf. Burch 2007a:126-127; Morrow and Hensel 1992) rather than on control of the land or territory. Theoretically, "ownership" of a tract of land containing abundant fish and game resources could be voided if the owner failed to adhere to established rules of behavior toward those resources. That is, a person's violation of the rules for proper behavior are manifested by poor harvests, which in turn indicate his loss of relationship with the site's non-human persons, and thus with the site itself. In this context, the question of whether others recognize an individual's right to use a given territory as permanent is comparatively unimportant, because rights of use to any particular area are governed to a large extent by its non-human persons.

The high degree of mobility *Nuniwarmiut* individuals and families enjoyed was due to a combination of the five land use principles described by Wolfe (1981:240-252), the principle of relational stewardship, and kinship connections between all local groups on the island. Contrary to the suggestion by Lantis (1946:253), however, this mobility did not translate into an absence of attachment to place (cf. Griffin

2004:132); in fact, attachment to place is implicit in the Principle of Relational Stewardship. This same combination of factors, plus a lack of evidence for significant hostile relations between the *Nuniwarmiut* and any outside group, may explain why non-*Nuniwarmiut* were able to travel to the island to hunt caribou without repercussions from the local people...only resentment. There is one notable exception to this statement; it stemmed from the unacceptable behavior of a group of outside hunters from the north identified as the *Qaviayarmiut*. Oral history accounts about the incident and its aftermath were previously summarized as shown below.

> Soon after realizing that caribou occupied the island the *Qaviayarmiut* made a "human fence" and trapped many of the animals. They took only the caribou's eyes, however, then released the animals. The Nunivak caribou herd reportedly disappeared as a direct result of these actions and was never again seen.
>
> This event happened in the summer. The following fall or winter the Nuniwarmiut captured the *Qaviayarmiut* and barricaded the entire group in a men's house at Nash Harbor (*Ellikarrmiut*) until all had died of hypothermia. The bodies were reportedly taken to *Asweryag* and buried under a large pile of rocks (cf. Griffin 1999:164-165; US BIA ANCSA 1995(3):95-120). A feature matching this description was recorded at the site; it measured 3.7 m x 3.4 m x 1.0 m high (Pratt 2001:39).

Local assertions that the Nunivak caribou herd's demise was due to mistreatment of the animals by the "*Qaviayarmiut*" (Pratt 2001:39) suggests outsiders' harvesting of the island's fish and game resources was permissible as long as proper respect practices were followed (cf. Fienup-Riordan 1988:464 [note 52]). Accordingly, it also provides support for existence of the Principle of Relational Stewardship.

Remarks on two related issues will close the subject of territoriality. One concerns the concepts of "estate" and "range": the former being the core area of a group and the latter the total area actually used by the group (Stanner 1965; cf. Burch 1998:309). These concepts were recently applied to the Iñupiaq of northwest Alaska by Burch (1998:310), who elaborated on estate by calling it the "geographic area over which an Iñupiaq nation claimed dominion." Individual *Nuniwarmiut* local groups were not equivalent to Iñupiaq nations [societies] as described by Burch, and certainly none 'claimed dominion' over discrete geographical areas of the island. The *Nuniwarmiut* collectively *were* generally equivalent to an Iñupiaq nation; but it would be redundant to apply the estate and range concepts to the *Nuniwarmiut*, because they constituted a single society [nation] whose estate and range were identical.

The second issue concerns *Nuniwarmiut* group boundaries. Each local group on the island was associated with a recognized customary use area or territory; but boundaries between groups were generalized, non-exclusive, and not defended against trespass.

Regardless of when they existed, all local groups had territories defined by the seasonal subsistence sites used by their members—and almost all of them were located along the island's coastal margins. Thus, despite incontrovertible evidence of extensive past use of Nunivak's interior (which includes the documentation of at least 70 separate sites [Pratt 2001:30]), there are no data from which *interior* boundaries between local groups can be extrapolated. This is why Figures 4-7, above, lack any suggestion of discrete boundary lines between the various groups designated therein.

The most reasonable explanation for why interior boundaries are not documented in the *Nuniwarmiut* data assemblage is that they simply did not exist. This might also help explain why outsiders were allowed to journey to Nunivak and hunt the local caribou herd without evident negative repercussions: i.e., since caribou hunting was primarily based in the interior, from a local group perspective the outsiders may not have been considered to be violating territorial boundaries. But it should also be noted that, with the possible exception of cross-island travel, interior land use must have declined dramatically after decimation of the local caribou (ca. 1890-1900). Thus, assuming interior boundaries did exist, *Nuniwarmiut* born after about 1880 would not have been able to say much on the topic; the probable high mortalities caused by the 1899-1900 smallpox epidemic would also have factored into this equation.

**Relations with Non-Nuniwarmiut Peoples**

There is no doubt that trade between the *Nuniwarmiut* and mainland Natives was established well before Russian contact (Griffin 2004:76, 89; Tikhmenev 1978:437; VanStone 1973:60-64). Lantis (1946:255) acknowledged the *Nuniwarmiut* had trade relations with neighboring groups but contended trade was not essential, because everything the people really needed could be found on their island. By extension, she asserted that prior to at least 1880 the only mainlanders the islanders traded with were "their friends and relatives, the Hooper Bay and Nelson Island people" (Lantis 1946:170-171). This is not inconsistent with Griffin's (2004:89-92) opinion that much of the Nunivak-mainland trade prior to 1900 probably occurred through intermediaries from Nelson Island. Griffin also mentions accounts of *Nuniwarmiut* traveling to St. Michael and the Kuskokwim River area for trading after about 1900, and provides an excellent summary of the post-1920 Lomen trading operation on Nunivak and integration of the local population therein (Griffin 2004:111-117). Concerning that operation, he also correctly points out that a report by Carl Lomen that trade regularly occurred between *Nuniwarmiut* and mainland traders on the winter ice between Nelson and Nunivak islands was obviously self-serving and had "no foundation" in fact (Griffin 2004:116).

The winter ice conditions in Etolin Strait that make the Lomen report unbelievable also explain the Lantis statement that the *Nuniwarmiut* exhibited an:

> ...absence of constant intercourse with other tribes (although there were warfare and trade, the whole island population did not need to be constantly and thoroughly organized to conduct or resist aggression; the natural environment assured the island of comfortable isolation for six months in each year) (Lantis 1946:260).

As with her remarks about trade, Lantis also reported that intermarriage between the *Nuniwarmiut* and mainlanders was rare: i.e., "There was some intermarriage with people on Nelson Island and at Hooper Bay although this was necessarily infrequent. Nunivakers in the old days did not marry beyond those two localities" (Lantis 1946:234).[75] In contrast, Fienup-Riordan (1984:82) claims intermarriage between Nelson Island and Nunivak Island was not uncommon by ca. 1890 (cf. Sonne 1988:36). But the position of Lantis on this subject was supported by extensive genealogical research among the *Nuniwarmiut*, so Fienup-Riordan's statement is suspect; it may just be a generalized Nelson Island perspective.

Besides trade and marriage (and caribou hunting [Pratt 2001]), warfare is the only other activity regularly cited as having induced contact between the people of Nunivak and the adjacent mainland prior to ca. 1900. The most bothersome warfare-related tale concerning Nunivak Island is the ill-supported but seemingly widely accepted notion

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[75] When Hooper Bay is mentioned in connection with Nunivak Island by Lantis (1946) it encompasses the villages of both Hooper Bay [*Naparyaaq*] and *Qissunaq* (Pratt 1984a:119-120 [note 10]).

that the island population was comprised in part by *Aglurmiut* (see VanStone 1988:69 [note 46]) migrants from the Kuskokwim River mouth area (cf. Fienup-Riordan 1988:31-33, 472 [note 92]). This issue merits specific attention.

There is no compelling linguistic evidence in support of the supposed *Aglurmiut* migration to Nunivak. For example, his analysis of Khromchenko's [Yup'ik] word list from 1824 (Jacobson 1984:629) led Jacobson (1998:xvi) to conclude "that in 1824 Nunivak had not yet been occupied by the Aglurmiut." If Jacobson's interpretation is correct this obviously would mean the claimed migration post-dated 1824 but: (a) in the early 1840s Zagoskin (1967:210-211) also expressed strong doubts about the veracity of such a migration (cf. Oswalt 1990:229 [note 6]); (b) no evidence of such an event was reported in the ethnographic or genealogical work of Lantis (1946, 1960); and (c) *Nuniwarmiut* oral history accounts likewise provide no support for an *Aglurmiut* migration to Nunivak. Regarding the latter, when Andrew Noatak was asked if he had ever heard of people from the Kuskowim River area (i.e., *Aglurmiut*) moving to the island he emphatically stated that the only former immigrants to Nunivak were "those who came from the north called *Qaviayarmiut*" (Noatak 1990:14-15]; cf. Pratt 2001).[76]

Proponents of the "*Aglurmiut* migration," in general, tend to cite the prevalence of internecine warfare *prior to Russian contact* as its motivating factor; but if *Aglurmiut*

[76] Griffin (2002:60, 64; 2004:72-73, 186-187), a researcher who is very familiar with *Nuniwarmiut* materials, seems inclined to accept that the reported *Aglurmiut* migration to Nunivak did occur. I was once receptive to the idea, as well (Pratt 1990:82).

had not made it to Nunivak by 1824 what would have motivated them to move there at a later date? Internecine warfare in the Yukon-Kuskokwim region was evidently a thing of the past well before Zagoskin's visit (e.g., Zagoskin 1967:281, 292 [note 42]; cf. Fienup-Riordan 1984:82). One would think the 1838-1839 smallpox epidemic must have further reduced any perceived need for such a migration: that is, associated population declines and societal trauma would surely have reduced any lingering threat of internecine hostilities that remained at that time (cf. Black 1984:36; Dumond and VanStone 1995:4-5).

A final, and highly tantalizing, thought about the hypothesized *Aglurmiut* migration (in general) was recently reported by Jacobson:

> ...Michael Krauss (p.c.) has suggested that the various (and varying) traditional accounts of the Aglurmiut migrations, rather than reflecting population movements as such, may in fact have been an ingenious way in which Yup'iks could account for recognized similarities in speech between the geographically far separated Egegik and Nunivak regions in particular, also sometimes involving similarities with Hooper Bay–Chevak, the upper Kuskokwim and/or upriver Yukon as well (Jacobson 1998:xix).[77]

[77] Interestingly, Zagoskin (1967:291 [note 40]) observed that "...in general, the natives of Norton Sound call their relatives who live to the south "Aglegmyut" [*Aglurmiut*] and "Kadyak" (cf. VanStone 1988:67 [note 17]). This adds another twist to the *Aglurmiut* migration hypothesis: i.e., it raises the possibility that this term did not always apply to the same group of people.

Returning to warfare accounts, per se, although Lantis did not question the veracity of legends about raids by mainlanders from the Yukon Delta and retaliations in kind by the *Nuniwarmiut*, she did note that the amount of such "warfare is unknown" (Lantis 1946:168-169; cf. Lantis 1984:218). For his part, Griffin (2004:71-75) accords the *Nuniwarmiut* a significant role in the region's "Bow and Arrow Wars." If this subject is considered from a devil's advocate position at least two problems surface relative to the *Nuniwarmiut*: (i) winter raids would have been virtually impossible, from either direction, due to Etolin Strait ice conditions (cf. Fienup-Riordan 1988:33); and (ii) although summer raids would be more plausible the press of subsistence demands at that time of year, *in every area of the Central Yup'ik region*, suggests they would necessarily have been rare occurrences. Ambiguous though it may be, the evidence also indicates warfare in this region was not a situation of large groups or entire villages opposing one another, but instead one of clashes (real or threatened) between small parties of commando-type warriors. We will return to this subject shortly.

## Theoretical and Terminological Considerations

Historical accounts are riddled with inconsistencies when it comes to identifying discrete socio-territorial groups among Central Yup'ik populations (e.g., Pratt 1984a, 1984b). Several anthropologists have produced works assessing those earlier errors and clarifying the structure of Yup'ik social groups (e.g., Andrews 1989; Fienup-Riordan 1984; Shinkwin and Pete 1984:95-101), which it is unanimously agreed

should not be called "tribes." These researchers—especially Fienup-Riordan—have made very valuable contributions to our understanding of the Yup'ik; however, some of their efforts have also introduced new inconsistencies to the mix. For the present study, the most notable of these is theoretical in nature and concerns the concepts of "regional group" and "society." The absence of definitional clarity and consistency in usage is the crux of the problem: that is, researchers have applied the terms regional group and society to the same Yup'ik populations as if they are synonymous but without specifically defining them as such. Thus, 19th century "Yup'ik Eskimo Societies" described by Shinkwin and Pete (1984:97) are listed as "regional groups" in an accompanying table; and regional groups identified by Fienup-Riordan (1984) have also been characterized by her (Fienup-Riordan 1990:153) as equivalent to Burch's (1988b:229) Iñupiaq "nations" [societies].

Some time ago, Burch and Correll (1972:18-25) explicitly distinguished a regional group from a society with reference to Natives of "North Alaska" (i.e., those who lived north of the Yukon River). Either the same distinction must be made with regard to the Central Yup'ik or researchers who consider the terms synonyms should make that position clear and thereafter consistently use only one of them in their written works (as Burch has done since 1998 with the terms societies and nations).

## The Regional Group and Society Problem

As noted previously, a regional group was an assemblage of two or more local groups, the members of which considered themselves—or were considered by others to be—part of a recognizable, larger social unit of one sort or another. Regional groups identified among mainland Yup'ik populations have been described as village group "confederations" that existed as of ca. 1833 (Fienup-Riordan 1984). Each village group within a confederation was reportedly affiliated with a particular "central" winter settlement and ranged in size from "between 50 and 250 persons, rarely smaller or larger" (Fienup-Riordan 1984:86).[78] Fienup-Riordan (1984) was the first to formally apply the regional group term to Yup'ik populations and, in most respects, her model closely followed that developed by Burch and Correll (1972) for Native populations in North Alaska.

The "loose confederations" that constituted these regional groups were said to correspond "to territorial and linguistic groupings" (Fienup-Riordan 1982:30-31; cf. Burch and Correll 1972). In support of this viewpoint Fienup-Riordan cited Oswalt (1967), who had himself relied on the earlier work of Nelson (1899). But Nelson's "tribal map" of the Central Yup'ik is not accurate with respect to linguistic groupings (Jacobson 1998:xii; Woodbury 1984:52-53) and the territories he delineated for those 'tribes' are also problematic (e.g., Pratt 1984a, 1984b). Her position relative to the

[78] The stated average size of these village groups is purely speculative: i.e., they were being described for "prior to the time of Zagoskin's travels" (Fienup-Riordan 1984:86) and Yup'ik population data for that period are virtually non-existent.

language issue was later qualified by suggesting that each regional group described "probably spoke" a dialect, distinct subdialect or mixed subdialect of Central Yup'ik (Fienup-Riordan 1984:91-93; 1988:456-459). The opinion that groupings of this type coincided with linguistic units was shared by Shinkwin and Pete (1984:101), who insisted that Yup'ik "societies did not contain people from different Yup'ik languages or dialects, with the exception of the *Qaugkumiut*." In both cases, the authors may have been acknowledging that—as locally understood—divisions/designations of people likely had linguistic correlates of some sort. But the linguistic correlates may not always have corresponded to what linguists would call dialects; distinctive usages or vocabulary might have been enough to signify group divisions. Even still, the available linguistic data as of 1984 were inadequate to produce an accurate language map of the Yup'ik ca. 1833 (or even ca. 1900) at the level of detail required to verify that every regional grouping described in the literature corresponded to a linguistic grouping; that situation remains unchanged today (cf. O'Leary 1999:1-6). There also were in 1984 and still are today insufficient data to produce an accurate territorial map of the Yup'ik ca. 1833 or 1900. These problems certainly were not lost on Fienup-Riordan or Shinkwin and Pete; they realized the regional group accounts they compiled for ca. 1833 and ca. 1900, respectively, were also imperfect.

Several authors have noted that the regional groups they described were what had previously been called "tribes" in the literature (e.g., Shinkwin and Pete 1984:95; Wolfe 1981:244); but the rationale for labeling Yup'ik populations as regional groups

has not previously been questioned. In my view, inconsistent applications of the regional group term to pre-contact and historic Yup'ik populations have raised conceptual problems not unlike those which burden the concept of tribe.

The regional group concept actually is not very useful for understanding Yup'ik socio-territorial organization, mainly because it implies greater unity between or integration among local groups across the region than can be demonstrated with the available data. That local groups interacted with one another in various ways (e.g., trade, ceremonies) is indisputable, but researchers agree that each local group was an independent entity and that the social identities of individuals were based on *local* not regional group affiliations (cf. Kashevarov 1994:334). Implicit in the statement that winter "was the one season when all the members of a confederation might join together" (Fienup-Riordan 1984:72) is the assumption that *regular* social interactions occurred between *all* local groups within each designated regional confederation. No one has presented evidence proving that was the case, however, and the reality is that data limitations would make such an objective extremely difficult to satisfy. To clarify, if it is not possible to identify every extant local group within the boundaries of a proposed regional group/confederation at a given point in time (e.g., ca. 1833) then it clearly also is not possible to determine the extent of interactions that occurred between all of its member populations. Absent this basic level of documentation, the claim that local groups were united into regional groups/confederations "through a

complex web of social and ceremonial exchanges" (Fienup-Riordan 1984:70) ultimately is not verifiable.

Certain similarities between the Central Yup'ik regional group model and that developed earlier for North Alaska have already been identified (e.g., treatments of warfare), but others are also noteworthy. According to Burch and Correll (1972:38 [note 11]), "Most, possibly all, of the regional groups in aboriginal North Alaska also had a general gathering of the membership built into the annual cycle" (cf. Burch 2006:126-128). The authors offered no evidence to prove this claim, however. They further reported such gatherings occurred at "fairs" that lasted several weeks, included multiple activities (e.g., trading, dancing, feasting) and involved hundreds of people (Burch and Correll 1972:30-31). The "Feast for the Dead" was the only event that conceivably might have brought all members of some Yup'ik regional groups together (e.g., Fienup-Riordan 1984:71-72; 1994:300-302; Lantis 1947:20-27; Nelson 1899:365-379; Oswalt 1990:38; Zagoskin 1967:118, 122-123, 229-230; cf. Andrews 1994:84-85; Morrow 1984:128)—but probably not all members of large-scale regional groups like the *Kuigpagmiut*; and the Feast for the Dead was not even part of the ceremonial repertoire of the *Nuniwarmiut* (Lantis 1946:182-197; 1947:21). Another similarity between the models is that each accorded written historical accounts significant accuracy and authority relative to their informational content about aboriginal history in the respective regions. Thus, and in contrast to the situation I have just described for the Yup'ik, Burch and Correll (1972:21) asserted

that "The anthropological and ethnohistorical literature on the [aboriginal population of North Alaska] is both comprehensive and of generally high quality." Given the various problems revealed through critical review of the Yup'ik model, it would be interesting to see how the above elements of the North Alaska regional group model would hold up under similarly close scrutiny.

In any case, above the nuclear family level, local groups clearly were the most important social unit in Yup'ik life and they had a dominant role in structuring land use and socio-territorial organization. The regional confederations described for the Yup'ik *did not in any way* dictate the actions of their constituent local group members; and they also "were not distinct politico-territorial collectivities" (Fienup-Riordan 1986:64). They simply encompassed different local populations on the basis of shared geographical affiliations or environmental settings, and were named accordingly (e.g., *Kuigpagmiut*, *Akulmiut*). Also, most of these group names were ethnonyms ("terms applied to a group by non-members" [Ganley 1995:103 (note 2)]) rather than autonyms ("terms people themselves use to describe their own group or group identity" [Ganley 1995:103 (note 2)]).[79] In the present study, *every* name used to designate a *Nuniwarmiut* local group is an autonym; this is not always the case with other group names reported herein, but every one of them also derived from *Nuniwarmiut* sources.

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[79] To offer an example of an ethnonym, among the *Nuniwarmiut* the term *Paugkumiut* refers to "three or more people from the Kuskokwim Delta" (Amos and Amos 2003:241).

Data presented by Shinkwin and Pete (1984:97 [Table 1])—and in this study—also show that, on an individual basis, Native perceptions varied concerning which local populations were part of any particular regional-level grouping. Finally, even if one accepts that these entities had mutually recognized boundaries (Fienup-Riordan 1984:87) the data are wholly inadequate to establish their placement across the region (cf. Pratt 1984b:57), especially as of ca. 1833. For all of these reasons, I contend the reported Yup'ik confederations/regional groups should not be treated as functional social groups, but instead as relative group names applied at a regional level (cf. Fienup-Riordan 1984:64, 70; Wolfe 1981:24-28). Stated somewhat differently, regional group names were little more than general terms of social identification. The following quote is relevant to this point:

> Terms for geographic affiliation occurred at several levels of contrast. The higher order contrasts referred to large "regional groups," called "tribes" in the literature. Below that, social identification could be established with smaller areas within the region, such as Kwikluagmiut, referring to persons living near Kwikluak Pass (the "people of the funny little river"), or Kipniagmiut, those living near the Kipniak River. Similarly, the people of each subarea could be identified with yet smaller subregions, like Alakanagmiut and Niliragmiut, which referred to winter villages and seasonal camp locations. There seemed to be no limit as to the size of the subregion or

> group which could be linked socially. During 1980-1981, the Kwigamiut referred to a solitary person living at the site of Kwiguk (Wolfe 1981:244).

As I noted in an earlier work, "The [*Nuniwarmiut*] designation commonly applied to the Nunivak people simply describes their geographical setting; it ignores the existence of more precise social group divisions..." (Pratt 1990:80). That this observation is also true for groups such as the *Kuigpagmiut* and *Kusquqvagmiut* was recognized more than 160 years ago by Zagoskin: i.e., he described the "tribes of the Kang-yulit, who live along the southern shore of Norton Sound, and along the Yukon and the Kuskokwim" rivers as being "divided into small groups with distinct dialects..." (Zagoskin 1967:107). This makes it clear that the tribes Zagoskin delineated (which included the "Kwikhpagmyut" and "Kuskokvigmyut") were very broadly conceived.

Yup'ik regional groups and societies delineated by contemporary researchers (e.g., Fienup-Riordan 1984; Shinkwin and Pete 1984) are often just as broadly conceived as Zagoskin's tribes, yet they sometimes designate social units of considerably smaller scale. Thus, Fienup-Riordan's (1984:91-92) *Kuigpagmiut* grouping encompassed the entire Yup'ik population of the lower Yukon River from *Paimiut* downriver to at least *Kuigaaralleq* [the "Hamilton" vicinity]—an area that contained numerous local groups (e.g., those organized around the winter villages of *Paimiut*, *Iqugmiut*, *Iquarmiut*, *Ingrirraq*, *Takcaq*, *Anqercaq*, *Kuigpalleq*, *Ingricuar* and *Kuigaaralleq*). But her *Pastulirmiut* grouping was comprised of a single local group (i.e., people

organized around the winter village of *Pastuliq/Pastuliarraq*). Similarly, Shinkwin and Pete's (1984:97 [Table 1]) presentation on Yup'ik societies treated the *Nuniwarmiut* (a society composed of up to 30 separate local groups) as equivalent to their *Taprarmiut*, *Pastulirmiut*, *Naparyaarmiut* and *Qissunarmiut* groupings, each of which consisted of a single local group. Inconsistencies of such an extreme reflect the ambiguity surrounding previously described regional-level Yup'ik social groupings—regardless of whether they were called tribes, regional groups, regional confederations, or societies. If Fienup-Riordan recognized this problem her clearest acknowledgment of it appears to be the following comment:

> ...the numerous small villages spread throughout the area with which the missionaries and early traders of the turn of the century came into contact represented the fragmented and scattered remains of these larger village groups and traditional regional confederations rather than the many small segments of an essentially homogeneous population (Fienup-Riordan 1984:65).

Unless I misunderstand this comment, Fienup-Riordan apparently considered both village [local family] groups and the hypothesized regional confederations to have become obsolete as units of Yup'ik society by ca. 1900. I disagree with this interpretation relative to local groups, as there is abundant evidence social units of this type remained functional throughout the Yup'ik region until at least ca. 1950.

Since I challenge the legitimacy of the whole regional confederation scheme the suggestion that those entities had dissolved by the turn of the 20th century is less troubling. By extension, however, if the fundamental organization of Yup'ik society had been so severely altered by 1900 then it follows that aspects of Fienup-Riordan's various interpretations of *traditional* Yup'ik culture and history are also problematic; because she equates 'traditional' with the pre-contact/prehistoric era, not with the historic Yup'ik (e.g., Fienup-Riordan 1984:63-64).

Turning to the concept of society, Shinkwin and Pete (1984:99) stated that Yup'ik "societies were made up of one or more permanent settlements containing a core of people who were *ilakellriit*, or relatives."[80] Exactly what a 'permanent settlement' meant to the authors was not explained but the context of their subsequent remarks implied it was a winter village. If so, they defined society much as I have defined local groups and Fienup-Riordan defined village groups, the main difference being that local/village groups were formed around single winter villages. Because Shinkwin and Pete held that a Yup'ik society could include multiple winter villages, the term served as a sort of catch-all category that could potentially accommodate every social unit above the nuclear family. They also described each society as a sociopolitical group and did not question their Yup'ik informants' reports that each society "represented a

[80] Additional research is needed before any definitive answer can be formulated, but the Cup'ig term "*ilakutellrit*" may correspond with the Yup'ik "*ilakellriit.*" The context of its usage in at least one oral history account (i.e., Noatak 1989) suggests *ilakutellrit* might refer to a village and its residents.

unit in war" prior to 1840 (Shinkwin and Pete 1984:95-101). Finally, their conception of these societies was elaborated upon and clarified by the following remark:

> Yup'ik societies in the early 1900s varied from traditionally-based, relatively homogeneous, closed groups with a long history, such as the Qaluyaarmiut, to those that contained remnants of fragmented local societies from what were probably formerly two or more regional groups, such as the Unalirmiut in the Norton Sound area (Shinkwin and Pete 1984:109).[81]

Thus, while cognizant that considerable change had taken place in the region by 1900 Shinkwin and Pete acknowledged it had not impacted every society equally and also believed 'traditionally-based' Yup'ik societies still existed at that date. The quote also implies the authors conceived of societies of both local and regional scales; unfortunately, they did not develop this idea.

As with the regional groups of Fienup-Riordan and the societies of Shinkwin and Pete, each Eskimo society in northwest Alaska was considered to have been distinguished by its own dialect (Burch 1975:10-13; cf. Burch and Correll 1972:22). The populations of separate societies in that region are estimated to have ranged from a few hundred to several thousand individuals (Burch 1988a:229; cf. 1975:12), which seems consistent with the potential population range of Yup'ik regional groups/societies.

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[81] The *Akulmiut* were characterized by Andrews (1989:101-113) as a society of virtual identical form to those defined by Shinkwin and Pete.

Applying the above language and population template to the *Nuniwarmiut* would produce a finding that they constituted a single society—or, hypothetically, two societies given the probable subdialect that once existed on the west coast of the island. But the *Nuniwarmiut* conceive of themselves as a single society, notwithstanding broad recognition of the existence of dialectal differences among their membership. Whereas the distinctiveness of the Nunivak dialect is an established fact, however, the jury is still out as to whether each of the mainland regional groups/societies anthropologists have identified also spoke distinct dialects or subdialects of Central Yup'ik. It seems obvious there was greater linguistic complexity and diversity in the region aboriginally than has been demonstrated to date (e.g., Pratt 2008); but that probability does not constitute scientific evidence of dialectal or socio-territorial divisions among the Yup'ik.

Also worth noting here is the explicit statement that traditional Iñupiaq societies "did *not* have distinct names" (Burch 1975:13; cf. Burch and Correll 1972:21). Perhaps Yup'ik social groups of similar scale also did not have distinct names? If this were used as a working premise we could ignore the relative group names that: (a) have already generated extensive confusion; (b) may not have referred to functional social units; (c) probably had little meaning to many of the populations they designated (cf. Ganley 1995); and (d) arguably have become terms of convenience that serve no constructive research purpose. Attention could then be concentrated on searching the

data to more accurately document the numerous local groups that formerly occupied the region and identify linkages that integrated certain groups sufficiently to potentially justify treating them collectively as higher-order social units.

## Warfare

As suggested by use of the term confederation, some degree of military significance was attached to regional groups: i.e., each was conceived to be an alliance of smaller, local populations that would potentially fight together against a common enemy (cf. Fienup-Riordan 1984:64; 1990:153, 160-161). In fact, "warfare" permeates Fienup-Riordan's portrayal of these confederations; this underscores her view that warfare typified prehistoric [which to her meant pre-1833] interregional relations in the region (Fienup-Riordan 1984:75-81; 1990:153, 156-157). By extension, this implies the threat of warfare was considered a factor in the original formation of regional groups. This perspective on warfare and prehistory among the Central Yup'ik is interesting given the following observation:

> ...in western Alaska population shifts due to the effects of epidemics began earlier and with more intensity than in northern Alaska, where such shifts date from the decade from 1875 to 1885. The result of this early disruption is that *informant accounts can not be relied upon to give a clear picture of what pre-*

> *epidemic patterns of inter- and intragroup relations were* (Fienup-Riordan 1984:86 [emphasis added]).[82]

'Informant accounts' have always been central to Fienup-Riordan's interpretations about Yup'ik society and history, whether for pre-contact or historic times. But the limitations she assigned to such accounts above are not evident in her discussions of Yup'ik warfare, most of which are highly interpretive and suggestive of a more definitive knowledge of the subject than is possible. A good example is the assertion that "Warfare had its own time frame, major battles occurring, according to tradition, in a 20 year cycle (to allow the defeated time to restore their numbers) from late summer (mid-August) through the winter (Khlebnikov 1979:235-236)" (Fienup-Riordan 1984:80). To verify such a claim would require reliable records about—or personal observations of—the people to whom it applied over a sufficiently long, continuous period of time (e.g., 30 to 40 years). No such records exist, however, and the region's contact history makes it obvious Khlebnikov's statement was not based on personal observations. Given the context in which it occurred, the unqualified citation of Khlebnikov's statement implies agreement with its contents.

Written historical accounts are also sorely incomplete and, like informant accounts, cannot 'be relied upon to give a clear picture of what pre-epidemic patterns of inter-

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[82] Note that the earliest known epidemic to strike the region was smallpox, in 1838-1840 (see Arndt 1985); this post-dates the terminal date [1833] of Fienup-Riordan's "pre-contact" period.

and intragroup relations were' in the Yup'ik region. An account by Kashevarov (1994) helps illustrate this point.

> I was unable to obtain any reliable information about the Magmiut.[83] It is said that they have...inherited from time immemorial a hatred of the Pashtuligmiut, and in winter try to kill them secretly on the Kvikhpak [Yukon River] wherever convenient. There is a rumor that once the Pashtuligmiut, having persuaded the Chnagmiut and Agul'miut to accompany them, set out in more than 100 baidarkas for the Kizhunak to punish the Magmiut for the incessant murders. But it is said that as the Kizhunak has steep shores and the Magmiut live in separate barabaras built in the cliffs, the brave arrivals, having had no success due to the impregnability of the homes of their enemies and having lost over 20 men, were forced to turn back (Kashevarov 1994:339).

Because ANCSA 14(h)(1) site investigations have occurred throughout most of the Kashunuk River's length, data now exist that allow the potential accuracy of this account to be evaluated from a geographical perspective. The Kashunuk is a sluggish, highly meandering river characterized by low banks. One of the few comparatively 'steep bank' areas along the river is in the vicinity of *Anipaunguarvik* (or "Owl Village"), over 50 miles—as the crow flies—from the confluence of the

[83] This group reportedly lived "along the Kizhunak [Kashunuk River]" (Kashevarov 1994:334).

Kashunuk andYukon rivers; but the banks there would not impede access from the river. The report that 'cliffs' along the Kashunuk somehow afforded the Magmiut impregnable house settings is entirely unbelievable. In this case, Kashevarov qualified as unreliable the information he presented about the Magmiut—and physical details provided in the description of Kashunuk River confirm the unreliability of the associated story (which Kashevarov referred to as a rumor). It would therefore be a mistake to interpret this story as evidence of warfare, per se. Many other Yup'ik warfare accounts, both oral and historical, would probably meet the same end if subjected to critical evaluation. Even still, the notion that warfare was widespread among the Yup'ik in pre-contact/prehistoric times is an essential foundation of the existing regional group scheme; and previous researchers interested in this topic have appeared to treat that hypothesis as an established fact (cf. Kurtz 1985; O'Leary 1995; Oswalt 1990:40-42; Shinkwin and Pete 1984:101).

We clearly will never know the truth of the matter, but my position is that aboriginal intergroup relations among the Yup'ik occurred on the level of local group to local group, and that reported warfare between "regional confederations" was also more commonly local (i.e., kin-related) than regional in scope. The evidence indicates individuals as well as local groups that may have been considered part of a 'regional confederation' had the right to remain neutral in times of war between supposed allies and enemy groups (e.g., Fienup-Riordan 1984:79-80; US BIA 1975-1976). Accounts about hostilities between Yup'ik groups suggest they tended to involve a limited

number of combatants, even when both sides' participants represented multiple villages. For example, one warfare account pairing the people of Hooper Bay and Nunivak as allies specified that the latter contingent consisted of *two warriors* (Bell et al. 1975:32-33). I submit that it is not reasonable to interpret the actions of two *Nuniwarmiut* men as indicative of the loyalties of the larger society to which they belonged—particularly since there is no evidence the *Nuniwarmiut* were ever in a state of war with another group (cf. Lantis 1946:168). Is it possible the reported involvement of these men was based on personal reasons having nothing to do with other *Nuniwarmiut*? Whatever the case, this account (like most others concerning warfare) suggests pre-contact hostilities between Yup'ik populations are best interpreted as localized, small-scale affairs (cf. Fienup-Riordan 1984:80).

My perspective on what the many warfare accounts mean relative to the socio-political past of the Yup'ik is contrary to the existing interpretation that "violence and conflict...regularly characterized interregional exchange prior to arrival of the Russians" (Fienup-Riordan 1990:153).[84] I accept that warfare occurred between different Yup'ik populations but reject the implication that this region was a veritable powder-keg of hostilities in prehistoric/pre-contact times. Among other things, I do not consider it possible to reconcile a situation requiring constant readiness for battle with the idea that a widespread kinship web and its associated alliance function was a

[84] This seems incongruent with an earlier interpretation by Fienup-Riordan (1984:80) that "the...Yup'ik did not consider themselves constantly under the threat of attack from their neighbors." Because such inconsistencies in previous works on the topic of Yup'ik warfare have not previously been brought to light they remain unexplained.

standard feature of Eskimo social organization. Additionally, consistent with oral history accounts from throughout the region asserting that land was not owned or territorially restricted (e.g., Alakayak 1989; Hendrickson and Hendrickson 1991; Phillip 1988; Polty et al. 1982b; cf. Maitland 1981:34-35), reports of warfare among the Central Yup'ik have seldom if ever been attributed to issues of boundary defense or protection of resources against outside intrusions (e.g., Fienup-Riordan 1990:156-157). This leads to a basic question: If warfare truly was endemic in this region prior to European contact (just as it is reported to have been in North Alaska [Burch and Correll 1972:35]) then what was its motivating factor? I have not come up with any reasonable answer to that question. Another problem with the hypothesis that warfare was endemic in the pre-contact era is how to explain its cessation...given that "positive interrelations predominated" among Yup'ik regional groups at the time of historic contact (Fienup-Riordan 1984:79). It obviously cannot be attributed to Russian influence; and the suggestion that a single act of food-sharing between two men from different regional confederations during a period of famine led to the end of hostilities across the entire Yup'ik region (Fienup-Riordan 1984:76) is not persuasive.

My alternative position on the issue of intergroup warfare among the Yup'ik is that comparatively few major fights actually occurred, but the prevalence of *talk about war* has over time created a perception of a cultural "emphasis" on war.[85] In this scenario, the myriad stories about warfare are interpreted as a testament to the

[85] A related observation by Phyllis Morrow (personal communication, 1 June 2008) helped crystallize my thoughts on this issue.

strength and continued vitality of Yup'ik oral tradition. Although that tradition includes an incredible array of stories and anecdotes about warfare many involve threats of war rather than actual battles; and those in which battles are described typically do not contain specific details about the battle site locations: hence few battle sites are confirmed (cf. Sheppard 2009:50-52). Significantly, an extensive review by O'Leary (1995) of Yup'ik oral history accounts and the historical literature concerning warfare in this region failed to identify a single reported raid or battle site on Nunivak Island (cf. Burch 2007b:25-26; Pratt 2001:39). This supports the following observation by Kilbuck: "It seems that the Nunivak Warriors were never molested, the straits forming a good barrier against any raids" (Fienup-Riordan 1988:33).[86]

The best known war stories have been related by numerous individuals from villages throughout the region—but details about the events described, the battle locations, and the winners and losers vary depending on the particular orator's village or area of affiliation. These variations are probably due mainly to the antiquity of Yup'ik warfare stories; however, they also suggest some of those stories serve to reinforce individual and group identity among contemporary Yup'ik residents of the region (cf. Sheppard 2009:55). I also believe such major variations in the most widespread of these stories make a somewhat conservative position on the incidence of warfare

[86] 'Nunivak Warriors' was apparently Kilbuck's designation for *Aglurmiut* who had presumably fled to Nunivak after losing a major battle.

between Yup'ik populations easier to support with the available historical and ethnographic data.

## Historical Summary

When the subject of Yup'ik socio-territorial organization first began to receive scholarly attention in the early 1980s it was recognized that the concept of tribe was not applicable. Thus, it was replaced with a modified version of the regional group model developed for North Alaska by Burch and Correll (1972). The regional group concept was probably the best option then available to anyone hoping to produce a "social map" of the entire Yup'ik region prior to 1900, because data limitations precluded region-wide descriptions of social groups at the *local level* during that period (Pratt 1984a:123-124). But the most detailed publication to date concerning Yup'ik regional groups contains an important and appropriate qualifier: "...finer group distinctions probably existed (e.g., within the group designated Kusquqvagmiut) than have been positively distinguished at this time" (Fienup-Riordan 1984:91). Data presented herein prove the validity of that observation relative to the *Nuniwarmiut*; and it is certainly also true for other Yup'ik populations previously designated regional groups.

For instance, applications for more than 1,400 ANCSA Section 14(h)(1) historical places and cemetery sites were filed in mainland areas of the Yup'ik region and over 800 of them have been investigated since 1981. That work has generated an extensive body of detailed data (e.g., oral history acounts, site reports) about historic social life,

subsistence and settlement patterns, culture contact and change; much of it could be productively used to identify local groups that existed in the region from ca. 1900-1950. For numerous areas, evaluating these data together with written historical accounts (cf. O'Leary 1995, 2009) could help define local groups from even earlier historic times. Though a large amount of the Yup'ik-related information in the ANCSA 14(h)(1) collection had been gathered by the mid-1980s it was effectively inaccessible to researchers until sometime after 1990 (Pratt 2004, 2009a). A significant amount of the *Nuniwarmiut* data used in this study is derived from the ANCSA 14(h)(1) collection.

The existing model of Central Yup'ik socio-territorial organization emerged through the fortuitous convergence of separate but complementary studies (i.e., Fienup-Riordan 1983:31-47; 1984; Pratt 1984a, 1984b; Shinkwin and Pete 1984), the key parts of which were published simultaneously. The model's 25-year tenure is not because it has somehow withstood the test of time but instead the result of never having been subjected to critical scrutiny. Researchers who have more than a passing familiarity with the Yup'ik understand that data limitations significantly impede attempts to describe many aspects of their history and culture on a region-wide basis. The topic of socio-territorial organization is one example.

Past studies of Yup'ik socio-territorial organization have been predominantly theoretical and approached the topic from either very generalized or comparatively narrow perspectives. Most were constrained in important ways by a fundamental

reliance on disparate, often anecdotal information found in historical accounts—none of which identified socio-territorial groups in a comprehensive and consistent manner across the region. Researchers have used Native oral history accounts (particularly those which reference warfare) to supplement and interpret the literature, as well as for purposes of extrapolation, but with only marginal success. The present study is the first to describe socio-territorial organization in any part of the region from the ground up: i.e., by using detailed, place-based data to connect individuals and families to specific settlements and identify discrete socio-territorial groups—*as recognized by the people themselves*—that existed in the subject area at different points in time. This has enabled me to discuss the socio-territorial organization of an Eskimo population with far more documentary evidence, and substantially less reliance on theory, than has been possible for other Eskimo scholars.

The *Nuniwarmiut* data facilitate a reanalysis of socio-territorial organization on Nunivak Island and provide incentive for doing the same in the Central Yup'ik region overall. In context it is not too surprising that these data paint a much more complex and dynamic picture of socio-territorial organization than what has been previously described for Yup'ik peoples. That is, this study's methodological approach was built around an array of data sets the combined volume and breadth of which are unmatched in any other area of the region. From my review of unpublished records in the ANCSA 14(h)(1) collection, however, I think data exist that, when analyzed,

will show that patterns of socio-territorial organization for other Yup'ik populations generally conformed to those described herein for the *Nuniwarmiut*.

# CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Through its focus on the *Nuniwarmiut*, this study has presented evidence that suggests Central Yup'ik socio-territorial organization was considerably more complex and localized than implied by the regional group concept that used to describe these people during the past 25 years. Because that concept rests on a foundation of limited data its application has, somewhat unavoidably, oversimplified and in other cases overstated important aspects of historic Yup'ik life. One example of this problem is that multiple named associations of people that (a) included more than one local group and (b) can therefore be accommodated under the existing definition of regional groups have now been identified among the *Nuniwarmiut*—a population that has consistently been treated as a single regional group.

Critically and comparatively analyzing how the regional group concept has been applied to Yup'ik populations convinces me that the term has little or no functional value for describing socio-territorial (or socio-political) organization among these people. Acknowledgement of this concept's shortcomings by Yup'ik scholars could stimulate the research needed to more completely identify local groups across the region from historic contact through ca. 1950. Maps of Yup'ik societies—comprised of all local groups whose members considered themselves one people—as they existed at different points in time could then be developed, as well. Even if the geographical limits and names of *some* societies (as with the *Nuniwarmiut*) were found to closely

coincide with those previously assigned to Yup'ik "regional groups," this effort could not help but result in a more accurate, fine-grained picture of Yup'ik socio-territorial organization than now exists.

I also conclude it is most appropriate, and consistent with the data, to recognize local groups as the primary (possibly the only) socio-territorial units that historically existed among the Central Yup'ik. In my formulation, a local group was an assemblage of relatives who considered themselves part of one social group, lived in the same winter village, and whose boundary included all of the seasonal camps its members normally utilized. Combinations of local groups constituted societies, many of which have been previously labeled regional groups. Societies were higher-order units of social identity, not socio-territorial units. Correlation of societies as defined herein with the previously identified societies of Shinkwin and Pete (1984) and regional groups of Fienup-Riordan (1984) is a reasonably simple matter. That is, any such units identified by those authors that included more than one local/village group correspond with a society in my usage. Conversely, those that designated people associated with a single winter or 'permanent' village fit my definition of a local group.

Every Yup'ik society (normally) included more people and (always) represented a larger geographical area or universe of settlements than did any local group. It is also probable that societies were separated by dialectal differences of some form, but the *Nuniwarmiut* data indicate this should be treated as a tendency rather than a defining

requirement. Finally, this "local group-to-society" hierarchy rests on the widely held belief that entities equivalent to what are here designated local groups were not entirely independent; instead, they were connected to others of their kind as parts of larger social units (e.g., see Burch 1998).

To clarify these points, the *Nuniwarmiut* were a single society throughout the study period (1880-1960), but the number of local groups constituting the society varied from 7 to 30 at different points during that period. Additionally, the Cup'ig dialect spoken on Nunivak is distinct from all others in the Yup'ik language, thereby separating the *Nuniwarmiut* from other Yup'ik societies. At the same time, however, evidence exists that an even more divergent, subdialect of Cup'ig was spoken by some island residents. While the existence of a Cup'ig subdialect has not been confirmed by linguists (who have yet to study this question) it has long been acknowledged among the *Nuniwarmiut*, who consider all Cup'ig speakers to be one people (i.e., members of a single society). Hence, in and of themselves, perceived dialectal differences did not dictate societal membership among the *Nuniwarmiut*.

This study has also shed light on the question of whether or not the *Nuniwarmiut* were territorial. According to the "economic defensibility model" (Dyson-Hudson and Smith 1978), territoriality is expected to result in hunter-gatherer groups characterized by a dense and predictable resource base plus comparatively high population density. Although the *Nuniwarmiut* clearly satisfied both of these criteria they definitely were

not territorial in the standard sense of that term's meaning: that is, no evidence was found for "exclusive use of a defended area" (Kelly 1995:163). This result applies both to relations among local groups on Nunivak and to the typical responses of the *Nuniwarmiut* society to the presence of outsiders (both Native and non-Native) on the island. Given the peaceful nature of their initial contacts with Russians in 1821-1822 and an absence of aggression toward the vast majority of outsiders who journeyed to the island to hunt caribou after ca. 1870 (see Pratt 2001), warfare obviously was not a default response to strangers in *Nuniwarmiut* territory. There is literally no evidence that the *Nuniwarmiut* "asserted dominion" over their territory, even though that territory was "distinct and had clearly defined borders" (cf. Burch 1998:309). On a related point, one could legitimately say place names indicated the boundaries of the *Nuniwarmiut*, but in an island setting this point is irrelevant; and none of the place names can be interpreted as examples of 'overt defense' (cf. Andrews 1989:430-431; 1994:81). Accordingly, my study strongly refutes the economic defensibility model. With the addition of what I have called the Principle of Relational Stewardship, however, my findings on the *Nuniwarmiut* agree with those presented by Wolfe (1981) for the *Kuigpagmiut*. My inability to define fixed boundaries between *Nuniwarmiut* local groups also supports Fienup-Riordan's (1984:81) conclusion that, "Although socially discrete, [Yup'ik] groups were territorially centered, not bounded."[87]

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[87] Based partly on one of my earlier works (i.e., Pratt 1984a), Burch (2007b:16) suggests that [in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta] "The lack of clear-cut borders was probably a consequence of poor drainage definition and frequent landscape changes caused by erosion or alluviation..." I disagree that environmental factors accounted for the absence of discrete societal boundaries in the region.

Two particularly significant results of this study deserve brief reiteration. The first is distinguishment of the Principle of Relational Stewardship relative to the question of *Nuniwarmiut* territoriality. This principle is an elaboration of previous accounts of hunter-gatherer populations emphasizing that use rights to specific territories and resources were based on individuals' lifetime relationships with those lands and proper behavior toward the sentient/non-human persons they contained (e.g., Anderson 1998:69-70, 75; Scott 1988:38-39). It has long been known that the Yup'ik have very similar cultural beliefs (e.g., Fienup-Riordan 1984:74; 1994:88-142), but those beliefs have not previously been used to formally analyze and explain territoriality. The Principle of Relational Stewardship is centrally important to understanding *Nuniwarmiut* territoriality, however, particularly with regard to the role played by outsiders in decimation of the local caribou herd.

A second major result of this study is the identification of named sealing groups; they were organized around spring and/or fall sealing areas and comprised of all people who regularly went sealing at those places. *Nuniwarmiut* sealing groups were not socio-territorial units; instead, they were purely seasonal entities and their memberships—which mostly involved people from multiple local groups—frequently overlapped. That is, people who were part of a particular spring sealing group might also be members of an entirely different sealing group in the fall. The majority of these sealing groups persisted on Nunivak until about 1940.

Named groups organized around the harvesting of specific seasonal subsistence resources have not been identified elsewhere in the Central Yup'ik region. The existence of such groups among the *Nuniwarmiut* is especially interesting in light of: (a) the extreme importance of seals in the local subsistence economy; (b) the fact that the largest accumulations of people annually occurred at highly-productive sealing locales; and (c) the ritual significance of seal hunting among these people historically. *Nuniwarmiut* sealing groups demonstrate that winter villages were not the only site types around which groups were organized or conceived; they also suggest the winter ceremonial season may not have been as important relative to integrating members of different local groups in some parts of the Yup'ik world as it was in others.

## Comparing the Nuniwarmiut

Discrepancies between previously published descriptions of Central Yup'ik socio-territorial organization and that presented for the *Nuniwarmiut* in the present study are thought to be more apparent than real. That is, I believe the differences reflect the greater volume, richness and comprehensiveness of data about the *Nuniwarmiut* compared to those available concerning other Yup'ik populations. Future research on historic Yup'ik groups in other areas of the region is predicted to reveal that land use, settlement history and socio-territorial patterns were much the same as described herein for the *Nuniwarmiut*. The data collection generated by implementation of

ANCSA Section 14(h)(1) holds the most promise in this regard, making it an essential source of information that Yup'ik researchers must not ignore.

But this suggestion of greater uniformity does not mean the *Nuniwarmiut* were mirror images of other Yup'ik groups in matters of history, culture and social organization: in fact, they actually differed in several important ways. Warfare offers an interesting first example. I absolutely do not endorse the idea that warfare was endemic in the region during the pre-contact era; nor do I deny that warfare occurred. The data I have reviewed, however, plainly suggest that internecine hostilities rarely involved the *Nuniwarmiut*. This is probably explained in large measure by their geographical isolation. Conversely, the incidence of warfare and intergroup conflicts in general must have been higher among other Yup'ik populations—every one of which shared territorial boundaries with other groups (including non-Yup'ik in some cases), and hence had more opportunities for interactions, both positive and negative, with "outside" peoples.

The very high incidence of warfare reported for Iñupiaq and Siberian Yupik peoples (e.g., Burch 1988b; Sheppard 2009), and related strong emphases placed on responding aggressively to territorial boundary incursions, separates these Eskimos even further from the *Nuniwarmiut*. Looking southward, the Alutiig ("Pacific Eskimo") of Kodiak Island evidently were almost diametrically opposite the *Nuniwarmiut* with regard to documented military traditions (see Black 2004); this

may have been true for other Alutiiq peoples as well. More significantly, the high degree of social stratification reported among the Alutiiq (e.g., Birket-Smith 1953:92-94) distinguished them from all Central Yup'ik populations.

The conclusion of Lantis (1946) that "unilineal descent groups with a patrilineal bias" were present among the *Nuniwarmiut* rendered them an anomaly among the Yup'ik, and also distinguished them from most other Eskimo groups. This topic merits a level of focused scrutiny beyond what was feasible in the context of the present study; nevertheless, I consider her finding problematic and most likely untenable, particularly to the extent that it implies the existence of corporate groups. My sense is that Lantis was strongly influenced by what she learned about "patrilineally inherited" mutual aid partnerships, objects, songs and property marks—some of which she evidently interpreted as "property" sufficient to satisfy the most important criterion of corporate groups (cf. Schweitzer 1992:6-7).

With specific regard to land use and settlement patterns, however, the data consulted herein indicate the *Nuniwarmiut* behaved as one would expect from practitioners of bilateral kinship systems. That is, individuals had recognized use rights to sites affiliated with ancestors from both sides of their family groups (i.e., male and female), and those rights were regularly exercised. Additionally, the matrilocal residence pattern often shifted a man's site usage away from places closely affiliated with his male ancestors toward those affiliated with his wife's family. This

combination of features may account for Lantis' conclusion—with which I concur—that no 'essential territorial restrictions' were held by specific family groups; but I disagree with her linked conclusion that family groups also had 'no essential territorial association.' Associations with specific sites and territories were strong and pervasive in family groups. I also have not found any evidence to suggest the *Nuniwarmiut* somehow emphasized males over females in the tracing of genealogies or personal/family histories.

The preceding remarks reveal my inclination to treat the kinship system of the *Nuniwarmiut* as similar to, rather than markedly different from, those of other Yup'ik groups and Eskimos overall. I am encouraged in this direction by the comparative reanalysis of Siberian and St. Lawrence Island Eskimo social organization by Schweitzer (1992), which produced compelling evidence that reports of patrilineal clans among those peoples (e.g., Hughes 1958, 1984) are not accurate, though accepted as fact by anthropologists for decades. That cautionary tale suggests a critical review of the *Nuniwarmiut* kinship system (Lantis 1946) might prove similarly enlightening.

Finally, one aspect of *Nuniwarmiut* social organization that clearly does appear to diverge from the Eskimo norm is naming practices. That is, the *Nuniwarmiut* often named babies after living (as opposed to dead) relatives and did not believe the soul of a person transferred to another by virtue of his/her name (Lantis 1946:229 [note

134], 235-239; 1947:21; cf. Curtis 1930:49-50). The Chukchi (Schweitzer and Golovko 1997:171), Copper Eskimo (Damas 1972b:29-30) and Belcher Island Eskimo (Guemple 1965) might have been similarly divergent, but the related name-soul and namesake relationships were present among virtually all other Eskimos (Schweitzer and Golovko 1997:169-171; cf. Damas 1972a:48-50; Fienup-Riordan 1983:149-152).

## Change, Oral History and Ethnographic Reconstructions

Scholars interested in Eskimo socio-territorial organization quickly recognize that a key difficulty with which they will have to contend involves processes of change through time (cf. Ganley 1995:103-105; O'Leary 1999:2-3). It is not reasonable to assume that Native lifeways observed in the mid-to-late 19th century were unchanged from those of the prehistoric era, just as ethnographic data gathered in the late 20th century should not be assumed to accurately describe 19th century or prehistoric practices. Unless anthropologists explicitly qualify and/or temporally anchor their associated remarks regarding Native social life and land use patterns, however, an implication of long-term stability may result. My concerns about this problem relative to Yup'ik socio-territorial organization were previously expressed as follows:

> ...historical changes in group size, composition, and territorial range are the cause for the tremendous confusion that prevails in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Eskimo group literature. The fact that previous authors have not adequately

> addressed the question of historical changes in these Eskimo groups is a major weakness of the respective Yukon-Kuskokwim regional groupings described in the literature. These groupings suggest that the regional Eskimo groups were static and stable through time, rather than dynamic and subject to the effects of historical and ecological influences (Pratt 1984a:123).

This study followed the diachronic approach implied in the above quotation. The results demonstrate that the number and locations of extant *Nuniwarmiut* social groups varied considerably at different points in the study period. Causes for some of these changes are unknown, but most are explained either by mortalities due to epidemic diseases that reached the island or by the process of population centralization brought about through the introduction of foreign educational, religious and economic enterprises. These same factors had similar effects on Yup'ik life throughout the region. Winter villages, seasonal camps, local groups and societies regularly came and went—and those that somehow were able to persist through time were not necessarily the same one year to the next. They suffered from epidemic diseases, resource failures, social breakdowns, environmental catasprophes, and myriad other factors that define an inescapable reality of human life: i.e., change is inevitable and humans are not in control.

If one accepts that change is constant in life then the task of stitching together ethnographic reconstructions of indigenous populations becomes problematic,

especially with respect to defining "traditional" periods applicable to the study populations. For his part, Griffin (2004:203 [note 38]) used the term "traditional" to describe "*Nuniwarmiut* settlement and subsistence use in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century"—clearly stating that the term did not apply to pre-contact/prehistoric indigenous practices. But because the term "traditional" is highly problematic, I have chosen not to use it as a label for my study period and have also avoided its use in reference to earlier historic times. Instead, this study concentrates on what might be called the second half of the "period prior to intense contact and change." I define that period as extending from 1821-1940; the rationale being that 1821 marks the first known European contact with the *Nuniwarmiut* and 1940 marks the date by which outside institutions had become a dominant influence on local patterns of land use, settlement and social life. Beginning my study at this period's mid-point (i.e., 1880) expresses my belief that the best way to produce an accurate account about the history of a hunter-gatherer population is to base it on the observed patterns of its members' lives on the land (e.g., subsistence, settlement) through time. It also underscores the fact that every individual *Nuniwarmiut* interviewed by Lantis and later researchers could speak with first-person knowledge about such patterns (many aspects of which remained comparatively stable until well into the 20$^{th}$ century); but none could do so about topics like warfare, the events of which occurred in prehistory.

This position may be at odds with those who would have us believe that once an indigenous population begins to have regular contact with a European (or some other

"dominant") culture its lifeways and essential cultural systems are immediately and irrevocably changed. This scenario is implicit in a previous researcher's decision to set the *terminal* date for the "traditional period" among the Central Yup'ik at ca. 1833 (Fienup-Riordan 1984; cf. Black 1984:24), coincident with the Russian establishment of Fort St. Michael near the mouth of the Yukon River. That decision effectively foreclosed the possibility of variable rates of change between different local populations across the region—even though many of them had minimal direct contact with the Russians (e.g., Fienup-Riordan 1988:123, 485 [note 189]). It also created a significant interpretive problem: i.e., if the 'traditional' period among the Yup'ik ended in ca. 1833 then how can oral history accounts recorded some 150 or more years (over 7 generations) later be viewed as accurate descriptions of traditional life, beliefs and practices? Two potential answers are: (a) with adequate support from reliable historical or archival documents; or (b) by treating the indigenous oral tradition as if it was immune to the very agents of change considered to have destroyed all other aspects of traditional life. But the first alternative is not tenable for the Yup'ik region, whereas the second would be extremely difficult to justify and impossible to prove. [88]

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[88] In comparison, Burch (1975:9-10) defined the traditional period in Northwest Alaska to have ended by 1850. His interpretations of traditional Iñupiaq life also are heavily reliant on oral history accounts, many of which were recorded some 120 years after the traditional period had ended (cf. Burch 1998:13). One reason he believes the oral accounts in question accurately portray aboriginal practices is his conviction that they are supported by written and archival sources germane to the period of concern (see Burch 1991; 2005:48-50).

One point of this discussion is that however one chooses to define the "traditional" period in a region it is important to recognize and clearly identify the associated shortcomings (cf. Asch 1981:339), and every such definition has some. Although I am not using that term, my definition of the "period prior to intense contact and change" in the present study is not without its own problems. That is, the period has been defined to extend some four decades beyond the date by which the local caribou herd had been exterminated, even though that event is interpreted to have significantly altered prior patterns of interior land use. My rationale is based on the broader perspective that, despite the loss of this important resource and related changes in land use patterns that must have followed, the *Nuniwarmiut* remained highly mobile practitioners of a subsistence-based economy through 1940. This was possible due to the diversity and richness of the local subsistence economy, and the comparatively late date at which sustained Euroamerican contact with the *Nuniwarmiut* began.

Another point is related to my somewhat conservative methodological bias relative to the use of oral history in ethnographic reconstructions. That is, the further back in time oral history accounts based on ancestral (as opposed to personal) knowledge are taken the more essential it is to qualify the reconstructions they support (cf. Burch 1998:17-19; Ganley 1996:6). Thus, in the present study oral history accounts describing activities and events that occurred before the births of the narrators were not automatically accepted as accurate; if they could not be independently confirmed by other sources they were qualified accordingly. After all, even the most competent and

highly respected Native historians can make mistakes. In fact, individual *Nuniwarmiut* from whom oral accounts used herein were collected often specifically qualified the information they provided about things that pre-dated their own lives (e.g., 'I don't know, but this is what I was told'). Conversely, first-person recollections of land use, settlement histories, and kinship relations were accepted as highly reliable; but cross-referencing between the *Nuniwarmiut* data sets sometimes revealed errors in accounts related to these matters as well. The ability to discover and correct such errors is a testament to the richly detailed, topically-varied and abundant database concerning the *Nuniwarmiut*. Data limitations do not afford this luxury to researchers working in most other areas of the Yup'ik region.

The preceding comments are not meant to imply that the conclusions reached herein about the *Nuniwarmiut* are somehow inviolate. As additional research is conducted among these people my own findings may well be modified and improved; hopefully in ways that will allow them to be profitably applied to other Yup'ik groups and also increase their comparability across the whole spectrum of the Eskimo world.

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